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**DANCING WITH GOD: A STUDY IN CONTEMPORARY  
WORSHIP AND CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTION**

**A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the School of Theology  
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**In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Religion**

**by  
Wesley Daniel Taylor  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Two historical events, the Black Manifesto confrontation and the ongoing war in Vietnam, and two created happenings, Simon and Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Troubled Waters" and the movie "2001: A Space Odyssey", help to emphasize what must take place during and following the experience of Christian worship. Each in its own way stresses what modern life makes increasingly apparent—that worship is vital only as it is related to the most important issues of the day, and related in a variety of ways. It is the author's conviction that contemporary worship must be molded and ordered after what is happening right now in our world. It is true, of course, that worship relates to past events and finds much of its strength in history, but Christian worship and social action must also relate and respond to the needs, events, and hurts of "right now". Charles McDonald has written these words:

...liturgy and life are never isolated from one another in any age. As we have seen, the media which shape the environment of any age impose their thought patterns upon what people of that age do—one of which is worship, which in turn shapes religion and life.<sup>1</sup>

So it is that the agenda of worship is determined by the events of the present world. It may find strength and direction in past events, and worship may want to seek and work on some future goal, but it cannot escape from the immediate problems and needs of mankind without losing its Christian identity.

The movie "2001" I believe to be most important for any understanding of worship, for it is a perfect exercise in fantasy. Fantasy must become central to much of our Christian worship for reasons that I will discuss later. As in "2001" fantasy too must relate to current dilemmas. Simon and Garfunkel have been for some time a source for contemporary worship. I selected "Bridge Over Troubled Water" as only illustrative of what their work can do for contemporary worship. Their word is alive and challenging as is the Gospel, and its content speaks to the conditions of men, as does the Gospel.

The Black Manifesto confrontation has shaped contemporary worship for two reasons. It affirms with no uncertain terms that God is alive, that he seeks to save his

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<sup>1</sup>Charles McDonald, "The Liturgical Medium in an Electronic Age", *Worship* XLIV:1 (January 1970), 29-30

people, and that his special people are those oppressed, overlooked, and walked upon. Also we see in the Black Manifesto a whole new style of Christian worship which we call confrontation. It is the dynamic of confrontation that will take up a great amount of time in later chapters.

Any responsible thinker today cannot overlook the tragedy of Vietnam. Tragedy is such a weak word for the events taking place in Vietnam, but really there is no word which can contain the utter destructiveness of the Vietnam war. Its pathos cannot be forgotten in Christian worship, nor overlooked for years to come. For Christian worship sees the war in Vietnam as an agenda item for worship, an item which points to the sinful creature that man is and continues to be as long as there are Vietnams.

I have taken on no less a task than affirming with all that I am that Christian worship, when properly used as the activity produced by and for man and directed by God, must become that activity which enables men to overcome their sinful-selfish nature and to look to the interests and needs of other persons first. We have a high calling and task, and so far, Christian worship has done only little to help us to live our high calling and task.

Our dilemma in worship may be illustrated by a recent comic strip. Snoopy is sitting atop his dog house. The time is late winter, the sun is just beginning to come out to melt the snow. A large snow man stands beside Snoopy and his dog house. Slowly the snow man begins to melt, and before long only a small bit of snow stands where the snow man had been. Snoopy looks at the remains of the snow man and comments, "That was too bad . . . he seemed like such a decent sort."

Many of the symbols that have stood for the church and the worship experience are beginning to wither and disappear just as Snoopy's snow man. And many of these symbols are receiving the same kind of comment, that Snoopy made to his snow man, "he seemed like such a decent sort". Symbols representing the church and the Christian life have been in existence since the earliest days of the church. The cross was one of these symbols, a fish was another, and the descending dove of peace still another. Before long the church building itself became a symbol for the church—a symbol for the gathered people of God.

However, many symbols have little or no meaning for us today. Some symbols mean different things to different people. For example, the church building for

some literally means the church, but for many others the church building is only the visible sign for a group of special people. Not only are many symbols losing their strength, but many have even distorted our faith. The church building can again be cited as an example. The church is people, people in movement, people in action, but too many persons think of the church as a building only, and that being a Christian is reserved only for those moments when we are inside the church building.

So it is that we need new symbols, with clear and powerful meaning for our time. A symbol, if clear and concise, will enable us to call to mind clearly and quickly what that symbol stands for and asks us to do.

Contrasting symbols of the church may help us understand the problem of the church in vitalizing its worship. One symbol might be a straight line. That line could remind us that a central task of being a Christian is to gather for worship in a direct relationship between the individual and God. However, this worthy intention is obscured by another meaning given to the straight line. In many congregations we sit in rigid, straight, and formal rows, and this becomes symbolic of a limited relationship. In this individualistic formality, many persons feel alone. We see the back of heads. We talk to only a small group of people.

We often hear the comment by persons visiting in a place of worship, "You had a wonderful service, but we felt as though no one really cared whether we were present. No one took time to speak; no one bothered to find out about us." The sad commentary to be made on many worship services is worse than that. Not only are visitors treated as strangers, but so are most members as well. We do not even know the names of those next to us. We have forgotten to be friendly, concerned, and compassionate within the Christian community gathered in the house of worship.

A contemporary folk hymn titled "Cold Cathedral" describes this lack of relationship in our worship.

Sunday morning early noon, I wandered in a chilly room and sat unnoticed. There were lonely people there who listened to a man who didn't care or show it. He just talked about nothing; I could not understand. I stood up and cried: Listen to me. Don't you see, you're not speaking openly.

They just sat and stared ahead at colored glass, while someone read some words corroded. And the rusty organ pipes began to moan some melody of woe outmoded. They did not even hear me; no one cared for my cry. Please don't leave me alone, leave me to die. Where are you, I must know.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>John Fischer, The Cold Cathedral, (Chicago: F.E.L. publication, 1969) pp. 6-7

The straight line is not a proper symbol for Christian worship, nor is it appropriate for the church. We need to break down the barriers that exist within the church. Entering into relationships is a central activity and concern of the Christian community, and must be central to the worship experience. This entering into relationships within the Christian community can best be seen in the example of Jesus with his disciples, as he was always seeking them out and sharing the deep, spiritual, worshipful moments with them.

In worship people should be closely related and connected. The symbol most fitting for worship is not a straight line, but a circle. We are all related to one another, because we are called by God for a special purpose. We hear in the words of Isaiah the special call. In Isaiah 61, we find, "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me." But Isaiah goes further in describing this call, for it is a call that requires us to act, to meet human need, and to serve those who have less than we do. So it is that we are bound together by God, and this binding together brings us into a community best symbolized by a circle.

But there is more to the church than a group of persons gathered together through a special calling from God. In Paul's letter to the Philippians, we see that this special calling as described in Isaiah requires an active response. Paul writes, "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."<sup>3</sup> When we begin to look after the interests of others, then our circle begins to develop arrows, pointing out from the heart of the circle, into the area beyond that which is enclosed by the circle.

Neither a straight line nor a simple circle describes the church adequately. Only when we add arrows pointing out from the circle do we find that symbol which is most fitting for the church. The arrows pointing out from the circle symbolize the words which Paul wrote in the second chapter of the Philippians, "have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant . . ."<sup>4</sup> This taking the form of a servant is the style of ministry we must adopt today, if we are to be the church. It is the response necessary for worship to be complete.

This servant role which looks to the interests of others rather than to the interests of ourselves is expressed in the title of a song which has become central to contem-

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<sup>3</sup>Philippians 2:4

<sup>4</sup>Philippians 2:5-7

porary worship. For our motto as followers of Jesus could very well be, "They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love". Paul talks about having the same love as God in Philippians chapter two. Having the same love means that we love others. That loving others means that we count them more important than ourselves, and that we look to the interests of others first.

The quality of commitment, that Paul writes about in Philippians, requires more from us than gathering within the church for worship. It requires from us a style of life that asks us to go beyond the worship experience. Action follows our worship. Worship is not separated from the world, nor does it deal with events that have no relationship to the events that are going on right now, this very week, in our world. The symbol appropriate for the quality of life described by Paul is not that of the church building, for the church is people, and people in movement. Certainly, the church can be found in a building, but it must, also, be found in our lives, in our compassion for others, and in our looking after the interests of others before we look after our own.

This looking after the interests of others first can require tremendous sacrifice on our part. Pastor Martin Niemoller of Germany found during World War II that his understanding of the Christian faith directly opposed the Nazi regime. His famous confession places before us the sin of inactivity, of placing our own interests first, of going along with the crowd. Pastor Niemoller wrote:

In Germany the Nazis came for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak up because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Trade Unionist, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Trade Unionist . . . Then they came for the Catholics and I was a Protestant so I didn't speak up. Then they came for ME . . . by that time there was no one to speak up for anyone.<sup>5</sup>

Paul knew what would happen if the interests of others were not placed first, and so he warned the Philippians. Niemoller found out during World War II what happens when we turn our backs and pretend we just don't see, and so warns us who are seeking to follow the ministry of Jesus today.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the great German theologian imprisoned and executed by the Nazis for his expression of his Christian conviction, during his several years in prison wrote many lines of poetry. One of these poems describes his inner struggle as he

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<sup>5</sup>Ernest Campbell, The Christian Manifesto, (New York: Harper and Row, 1969) pp. 70-71

sought to follow the Christian way more perfectly. Bonhoeffer wrote these lines:

Who am I? This one or the other?  
 Am I one today and the other tomorrow?  
 Am I both at the same time? A hypocrite before men,  
 before myself a contemptible, pitiable weakling?  
 Or am I like the defeated army  
 that retreats in disorder from a victory already won?

Who am I? This lonely question mocks me.  
 Whoever I am, you know, oh God, I am yours.<sup>6</sup>

Bonhoeffer in these short lines of verse, sums up his whole life—the agonies and self-doubts, as well as the self-control, serenity, and great courage. His whole life was in God's hands, just as we are told by Paul that Jesus humbled himself, took the form of a servant, and remained obedient to God, even when it meant death on the cross.<sup>7</sup> We become capable of such sacrifice and service, as described in Philippians, as our lives rest in the hands of God. This becomes more fully possible through vital worship. Then we can say with Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Whoever I am, you know, oh God, I am yours".

The style and quality of life necessary for Christian living today comes through an experience of such depth and strength as can only be found in the Christian community at worship. Worship is the source, direction, strength, and reason for Christian social action and concern.

It will be the purpose of this dissertation to strengthen the relationship between corporate worship and social action. Worship is self-centered and ingrown when it is not connected to the needs and problems of the world and its people. Worship is only complete or finished when it results in acts of compassion and deeds of mercy in our everyday lives. But worship must be vital and responsive to modern communication techniques, modern language, modern music, and modern events. Variety must be the watchword in worship. We can no longer worship in traditional forms alone.

In the following chapters, I will seek to understand how the budget and church building effects worship and mission. A new role for the minister preparing worship is needed, and this managerial role will be explained. Confrontational worship, as best seen in the Black Manifesto, will take a central place in this dissertation. Variety in the worship experience will become more apparent, as this dissertation progresses. Modern man worships

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<sup>6</sup>Susan Wiltshire, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Prison Poetry", *Religion in Life*, XXXVIII:1 (Winter 1969), 530

<sup>7</sup>Philippians 2:8

in as many ways as there are men and women, boys and girls. One of these ways is through fantasy, and I will suggest ways and reasons for the use of fantasy in worship. Then the concluding chapter will attempt to gather aspects together under the symbol, "dancing with God".

## CHAPTER II

### BUILDINGS AND BUDGETS IN RELATIONSHIP TO WORSHIP AND MISSION

If we are to understand the relationship between worship and social action, we must start with a new understanding of what the church building should be like. Where is it best to worship? What kind of responsibility does the gathered church have in building its place of worship, since the church building itself becomes a social witness to the world?

The construction of a church building also affects how a church budget is apportioned, and this directly effects the program, mission, and staff of a local congregation. For example, if the decision is made to build a new sanctuary, then in most cases the program and staff size will suffer until the new sanctuary is paid for. So, too, the size, shape, and content of a sanctuary directly effects how and who worships. Gregory Dix writes,

It was this originally domestic spirit of Christian worship as much as anything else that preserved the clear understanding of its corporate nature. The understanding of this began to fade at once when it was transformed into a 'public' worship in the great basilicas of the fourth century.<sup>1</sup>

The financial budget directly effects the program and mission of a church, and the sanctuary has much to say about how one worships. Any study of contemporary worship and Christian social action and witness must take these factors into consideration.

Ethical priorities must be considered, the dynamic of social witness must be understood, and who and how one worships must be taken into consideration. James White writes about the church building program and says,

To spend so much time and so much money without an understanding of the basic principles involved is an extraordinary misfortune. Worse than that, it often means that the buildings are detrimental to the life and mission of the Church instead of being beneficial.<sup>2</sup>

Very few white, middle class congregations suggest in their structure any attempt to deal with the social witness dynamic or the amount of outreach they can undertake. The actions of the church in building large, plush, and stylish buildings speak louder words to the general public and the world's needy than the preacher's word in the worship service.

The Black Manifesto has confronted the church with its lack of action and

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<sup>1</sup>Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy, (London: Dacre Press, 1945), p. 18

<sup>2</sup>James White, Protestant Worship and Church Architecture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. vii. Although White does not deal with the social witness issue directly, he believes that such a concern must guide a church in its building program.

abundance of talk. In a statement from James Forman are found these startling figures, <sup>9</sup>

Every year religious organizations gather about \$5 billion in contributions. The value of their "visible assets" has been estimated at \$79.5 billion—almost double the combined assets of the country's five largest industrial corporations.<sup>3</sup>

From the above figures, one can quickly see that church business is big business, and that church buildings represent large holdings, to say the least. Certainly those responsible for the Black Manifesto must be given credit for calling to our attention, in the only way that would catch our awareness, the ethical implications involved in commanding such large financial holdings.

The Black Manifesto's challenge to action instead of speech, on the part of the church, seems to have put many on the defensive. Many reactions to the Black Manifesto were to reject it and then to go on to say what a given denomination was already doing to help the poor and oppressed. I might note that any given denomination was doing only very little. Typical responses from many denominations went something like this,

Manifesto is rejected, usually with citation of already existing initiatives (or endorsement of some extant program), and expression of deep commitment to poverty eradication. This characterized reactions from the Catholic Archdioceses of New York and St. Louis, the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, many Episcopal bishops in whose dioceses the matter arose, and United Methodist bishops, who noted a \$20 million Fund for Reconciliation slowly being raised in the denomination.<sup>4</sup>

It is not my intention to study the Black Manifesto in depth at this point, but only to suggest that ethical priorities are involved when any church deals with any amount of money, whether it be just a few dollars or several million.

It must be stated that in some cases, ethical priorities are being considered when budgets are being drawn up. Lyle Schaller wrote about the new kind of concern for the denominational budget. In the past, Schaller has seen such an attack center in upon the size of the budget, but this is not happening in the new style attack. Schaller writes,

This is not the first time proposed denominational budgets have been attacked. But the new assault is different. Traditionally, the opposition has been directed mainly at the size of the askings; today it is concerned rather with how the anticipated receipts are to be allocated.<sup>5</sup>

This allocation of anticipated receipts on denominational budgets may mark the beginning

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<sup>3</sup>Robert Lecky and H. Elliott Wright (eds.), Black Manifesto (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969), p. 144

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 18

<sup>5</sup>Lyle Schaller, "The New Style Attack on the Denominational Budget", Christian Century, LXXXVI:48 (November 26, 1969), 1515

of a consideration for ethical priorities, Schaller suggests. For a long time denominational budgets were set up along traditional needs and reasons. For example, no one ever questioned the amount that should go for pensions and for new church development. But now it would seem that these two "sacred" areas are not even safe. New needs and concerns are calling for denominational financial support.

Schaller writes about the recent denominational budget meetings and suggests that a certain group of persons can be found responsible for the challenge to the budget. He writes,

In this year's meetings the critics frequently represented a coalition of urban pastors; men in specialized ministries dealing with such issues as poverty, racism, housing, and community development; young clergymen from rural churches who saw an opportunity to make an affirmative response to the urban crisis; a surprisingly large number of denominational executives and staff; a few politically sophisticated laymen—and nearly all the black pastors and black lay delegates.<sup>6</sup>

It would seem, at least from Schaller's article, that some persons are beginning to respond to the needs of our day.

Schaller sees this new style attack resulting from several dynamics at work. One of these dynamics is the Black Manifesto and its challenge to the churches to meet the needs of black people. Schaller writes, however, about the Black Manifesto,

While there can be no doubt that this was an important factor, actually it merely exacerbated a festering sore of discontent which had begun to make its presence felt in the mid-1960's. It first became visible in the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., then showed up in Methodist and Presbyterian, U.S.A. churches, and the United Church of Christ.<sup>7</sup>

The Black Manifesto then, according to Schaller, was that element which brought the already existing problem to light.<sup>8</sup> Some of the deeper problems, says Schaller, are related to issue-centered ministries like race relations, housing, poverty, welfare, and community organization.<sup>9</sup> These issues can be found at the heart of our nation's problems and represent a tremendous need that must be met in order for human life to be found of worth. These, then, are problems central to the attack on the denominational budget.

Schaller sees another dynamic at work that has caused the church to take

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 1516. Lecky and Wright op.cit., pp. 4-6, might question this.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 1515.

a hard look at its priorities. In the last half of the 1960's, inflation and recession began. These economic trends forced denominations to take a hard look at their budgets in order to weed out those projects which could be gotten along without. Schaller writes about denominations and the inflation problem, and says,

Review of the budget led to questions: "Does the budget represent the priorities of our denomination?" "Are these really our judicatory's top priorities?" "Should not its priorities be poverty, peace, housing for the poor, and concern for the plight of the black man?"<sup>10</sup>

Also influencing the new style attack on the denomination budget is the trend within churches to challenge a wider range of evils; for example, the ABM system, the continued war in Vietnam, the plight of the poor, and urban decay. Schaller sees the church at the front of this challenge, and believes the challenge appropriate to federal spending and denominational spending as well. He writes,

Perhaps the most important factor involved in the current discontent is the adoption by a growing number of ministers and laymen of a value system which places the primary emphasis on definitions of the church as mission and on the role of the church as prophetic. In this system a much lower priority is assigned to the traditional concern with such church-related institutions as colleges, universities, children's homes, and housing for retired church members. Though this position is adhered to by churchmen of all ages, it is increasingly common among younger ministers.<sup>11</sup>

It is this challenge to the traditional in church budgets, that is bringing about a shift in the shape of the denominational budget. Hopefully, this challenge will help the church to consider budgets on the basis of ethical priorities and not on the basis of what has been paid for in the past.

In the past, new items in the budget usually were the last to be funded. Those items which were long established got first claim, and if any money was left over, it might go for new programs. But this kind of approach to budget decision making meant that very little, if any, would ever go to new programs and to meet new needs. It is precisely this approach that has caused the church to be challenged by the Black Manifesto. John Mulder has written recently,

If, in fact, the church is a financial empire, James Forman claims that it is therefore implicated in a corrupt, racist economic system which has exploited and continues to exploit the black man. His solution; the church should "do some

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 1516

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.,

stewardship" by bringing its words about brotherhood into congruence with its economic wealth . . .<sup>12</sup>

Hopefully as one consequence of this, the church will learn fully that it is not in the world primarily to build bigger and better buildings.

The words of John Mulder speak directly to the church as business and not prophetic institution when he writes,

If we do make that comparison, if we realize that the body of Christ has more to do with AT&T than with those in prison, those in poverty, and those who are oppressed, our repentance must be more than an anguished cry for forgiveness, although that is necessary. Our repentance must be more than the payment of reparations, although that may be necessary. More than anything else, we must come to ourselves, recognize the church for what it has become, and bring it to its knees in repentance. This ought to involve a new and radical examination of that amount and extent of the church's wealth and power, and clearly such an examination should bring a re-appropriation of the church's resources.<sup>13</sup>

It is an understanding of the church as servant, and of worship as the source of servanthood, that must challenge the church to action. The great wealth of the church has caused it to be challenged. This great amount of wealth has caused the Black Manifesto to come right into the heart of the worship experience, for our thick walls have allowed us to forget the everyday world and its needs. It is our wealth, too, that has caused many in the church to lose their commitment, for when the going gets easy, the commitment gets weak. The church building has become so plush and many of our programs so ingrown, that we have forgotten the world outside and the many pressing needs before the world. So it is that the worship experience of the church must be turned into the needs of the world, and it must hold before those who worship the cries and pleas of a world in need.

When a local congregation gets over its money making—plush building syndrome, then that congregation can more easily begin to come alive with action and commitment. Ernest Campbell, the preaching minister of Riverside Church where the Black Manifesto struck first, has written,

The confrontation at Riverside Church did more for us than to us. It has fired our people with a new willingness to work. It has driven us to seek the theological foundations on which authentic social action rests. It has made the racist in our midst and in our own hearts raise his hand and confess. Some will doubtless leave the church because our response was too liberal. A few may leave because it was not liberal enough. I cannot help feeling, however, that in the long run Riverside will attract in growing numbers people who believe with the late Daniel

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<sup>12</sup>John Mulder, "The Church as Financial Institution, or Forgive Us Our Debts" *Theology Today* XXVI:3 (October 1969), 297

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 298

Poling that the Gospel is "first personal and always social".<sup>14</sup>

It is this conviction and understanding of how the church works, that gives much cause for hope in the church.

A United Methodist minister has written in The Christian Century, a response to the earlier mentioned article by Lyle Schaller. This minister agrees with Schaller, but goes even further in his understanding of a local congregation's budget. John Dunham suggests that the church in the future, in order to meet human needs in a given community, will have to keep most of its money in the local area for its own local programs. Dunham writes,

Thoughtful, dedicated churchmen who are concerned about the mission of the church are beginning to ask their own hard questions about the division of the pie. They have been taking seriously the idea that the church should be on mission in the local community, and that is priority No. 1 . . . . The cry from the pew is for a chance to carry out our mission in the community, and it takes money to do that job.<sup>15</sup>

The above comments may have to become the way of life for the church for some time before we can reach the position again where large amounts of money are sent away from the local congregation and program. The above comments by John Dunham are convictions on the part of many which are bringing about changes in our understanding of where the money goes and for whom.

Not only is a social action ministry making it necessary for the priorities to change, but a new approach to budget preparation will, also, help to shift the priorities. The "add-on" approach to budget preparation will soon have to be scrapped. This approach has already been introduced early in the chapter. The "add-on" budget, which tends to keep traditional items on the budget while omitting or minimizing new items, will have to be dropped in favor of an approach which will allow for new ethical priorities to receive needed monies. Schaller writes,

It appears inevitable that the "add-on" approach which uses last year's budget as the basis for preparation of the new one will be scrapped, with budget becoming an instrument for planning and management. The shift will be from emphasis on "input" (with the budget reported in terms of dollars going into salaries, programs, etc.) to emphasis on "output" (with the budget presented in a format revealing what the proposed expenditures will buy in terms of program).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Ernest Campbell, "The Case for Reparations", Theology Today, XXVI:3 (October 1969), 283

<sup>15</sup>John Dunham, "Heard from the Pew", Christian Century LXXXVII:3 (January 21, 1970), 84

<sup>16</sup>Schaller, op. cit., p. 1517

This new approach to budget planning will allow for new programs to be initiated and have priority over older programs that tend usually to center in on the congregation and its building. This new approach to budget making will enable persons to see more concretely what will happen with their money and how many persons and needs can be reached and served. The new budget will reveal specific programs, and not large amounts that go for such items as salaries, retiring of the debt, and keeping the church building open. These are important items but they are impersonal and often very large figures. The new approach will be people and action centered, with persons giving to specific items and needs that "turn them on" and arouse their interest.

Lyle Schaller suggests a new method to be utilized in preparing the budget; a budget which relates to obvious needs and priorities. Schaller writes about this approach,

A possible change is adaptation to the churches of the planning-programming-budgeting system developed in the defense department. This system provides a framework which brings together into one process planning, goal formulation, fiscal control, analysis of the probable consequences of alternative courses, and projected needs and costs. It ties proposed appropriations in with policy goals and helps the decision makers to see the whole picture more clearly.<sup>17</sup>

The above approach or something similar to it must be utilized by the church today, if the church is to be relevant to the needs of a given community, nation, and world. The "add-on" budget does not meet the needs as well, for it merely tends to conserve past programs, repair buildings, and handicap new ideas and needs.

Often times a budget was set by a small group of persons who had no idea, or very little idea, as to the direction a particular congregation wanted to go. Here again, if worship put before the congregation problems and possible solutions, then persons could begin to see where their money should go and how it could help. Worship should, and can, become that experience which helps to focus for the congregation the focus of their mission.

An example of the church in mission can be seen in comments made by Will Hildebrand, program director of the Board of Missions for the Southern California-Arizona Conference of The United Methodist Church. On the conference level, Dr. Hildebrand sees a shift in money allocated from new church extension, to money allocated to urban and experimental ministries. Not only have most of the funds for new churches been cut, but much of that remaining portion of the church extension budget is being used

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

for staff salaries in congregations that cannot afford such salaries. This indicates a new understanding of the concept of church extension. It illustrates one way in which budgets are being adapted to meet the more crucial needs of the church. If a new understanding of worship and places where worship can take place can be coupled with this shift in church extension, even more monies can be released for the church in mission.<sup>18</sup>

Dr. Hildebrand stated that he saw very little of the publicized split between conservative and liberal churchmen in their pattern of giving. Hildebrand sees very few conservatives leaving the church or withholding financial support because of liberal stances in the church. Financial giving is decreasing, if at all, because of tight money, higher taxes, the numerous problems of a "gun and butter" economy, and very high interest rates. Perhaps the economy can be utilized in a positive way, to help convince people that a large room is not needed for worship. Worship can take place in a variety of settings, and this point may get across because some congregations just cannot afford a large building for worship.

Likewise, Hildebrand has seen very little withholding of financial support because of the Black Manifesto. Here again, he believes that very few conservatives have left the church, or are leaving, because of the Black Manifesto confrontation. In fact, he sees the Black Manifesto as a tool for bringing the church back to life. He feels it has done more than any other document in recent years to wake up the church, bring the feeling of worth and importance into the lives of minority group ministers in his conference, and to call the church to contemporary action. The Black Manifesto is seen by Hildebrand to be the word of God to our present age. It is through such a challenge as the Black Manifesto that the church is able to reorder its financial priorities so that buildings and budgets will not handicap the church in its mission of Christian social action.

Dr. Hildebrand, also, commented about conference apportionments, and their continual increase. He stated that apportionments must be reduced or at least held at present levels, so that local congregations are not crippled in their own program budget. For the past five years or so, the apportionments have risen in the Southern California-Arizona Conference, and probably this is true of most other conferences and denominations. In a time when congregational budgets barely hold their own and apportionments go up, less and less money becomes available for the local congregation. Hildebrand believes that many con-

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<sup>18</sup>Interview with Dr. Will Hildebrand, March 6, 1970.

gregations have had enough with rising apportionments, because the local congregation has accepted the idea that it, also, is to be in mission locally. Apportionments must be reduced so that local congregations can become more socially active.

A united Methodist minister in Ohio has much the same comment.

Or, hear these sharp words from our finance committee after it had looked at the annual conference's askings, including a new one to support special ministries in black churches: "We should do that, but why are all the other askings increased? If that is priority No. 1, then reduce the others. We can't cripple our local program to pay for all that overhead. There is important work here we should be doing."<sup>19</sup>

The above comments do not indicate a lack of commitment to the church or the beginnings of the death of the institutional church. Instead, they merely indicate a concern for the church to meet the crucial human needs of our time. An understanding of worship that will allow worship to take place in something other than a special room is allowing changes in local church budgets, and in conference apportionments.

There appear to be three views on church buildings. One sees the church building as a sacred place, uniquely important because it is built to the glory and service of God. The second position holds that buildings are necessary for the continuation of the institutional church and that it is only through the visible church that money is collected and given to the poor. The third viewpoint is quite daring, for it holds that the institutional church must risk everything, including its life, to serve and meet human need. Let us look at each of these viewpoints in some detail.

The first viewpoint can be seen clearly in much of a book by James White,

Architecture, then, can be a means of teaching those who enter the Church what it is to be—one in Christ. Liturgical architecture provides the space and tools in which the central acts of the Christian life are performed in the common worship of God. The building is indeed a most important concern of the Church since it provides all the physical conditions necessary for a crucial part of our work done in God's service, our common worship.<sup>20</sup>

The church building, from this point of view, is very important and necessary for it provides the vehicle for inspiration, education, and ritual worship. The church building allows through worship a mystical encounter with a superbeing, that can only be served through the most elaborate or most proper of church settings.

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<sup>19</sup>Dunham, op. cit., p. 84

<sup>20</sup>White, op. cit., p. 201

The second position is clearly visible in an article in the Los Angeles Times, telling of the controversy surrounding the construction of a Roman Catholic Cathedral in San Francisco. This widely held second position, that of the necessity of the visible institutional church in order to serve effectively, is illustrated in a quotation from the pastor of the new cathedral, Monsignor Thomas Bowe. Bowe was quoted as saying,

We are giving the poor a great deal in this building. It belongs to the community. Man does not live by bread alone. Besides, the archdiocese appropriates many millions of dollars every year for charity.

If the cathedral had not been built and the building fund had been spent for bread, what would we have today but poor people who are still hungry?<sup>21</sup>

The position stated by Bowe seems very hard to understand, for seven million dollars would go a long way in feeding and educating the poor. Or, at least splitting the amount equally, half for buildings and half for the poor, would certainly be a much more Christlike action. Bowe, also, stated that ever since 1964, when plans were prepared for the building of the cathedral, much controversy had developed over the very issue of whether or not the money should be given to the poor.<sup>22</sup> It would seem to me that every congregation must consider this very question, before it decides to build anything. Every congregation must take seriously the words found in the first chapter of the book of James, and "become doers of the word and not hearers only".<sup>23</sup>

Another angle to this second position can be seen in the work of John Davies. Davies writes about the church building,

Christians, it has been argued, are called to serve, and the service of others not infrequently involves the provision of buildings. A church for others will plan its buildings in terms of the human needs of the neighborhood, irrespective of whether or not those in need choose to call themselves Christians, since the object of the Church's service is not itself but the world. What is required, therefore, is not just centres for services but service centers. Since the form of the Church is that of the servant, the form of a church must be for serving. The need is for multipurpose buildings, the functions of which are not defined primarily by the restricted liturgical requirements of a Christian group, but by the role of that group in the world today.<sup>24</sup>

Davies affirms the role of the church as servant. The church in all that it does, even the building of the physical elements, is governed by service as the priority item. Worship gov-

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<sup>21</sup>Los Angeles Times, (March 9, 1970), 27

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>James 1:22

<sup>24</sup>John Gordon Davies, The Secular Use of Church Buildings (London:SCM Press, 1968), p. 212

erned by the same priority item as well as the church structure. Worship should be designed with the needs of the world in mind, instead of being styled after some book of worship that suggests it be done a certain way because it has been done that way for several hundred years. Davies struggles with the financial, theological, and ethical aspects of building a church, and his decision to build service-centers, rests upon this struggle. Davies writes,

Should a Christian community devote a large share of its financial resources to bricks and mortar or reinforced concrete? Should it not rather seek to serve the needs of mankind? Indeed, it is arguable that to build churches for cultic occasions only can be a self-regarding "spiritual" luxury, when millions of men and women are suffering from lack of material assistance. Thus, the primary question is not: how much can we afford, but acknowledging that we are stewards of our financial assets, how can we best exercise that stewardship for the furtherance of God's purpose for the world?<sup>25</sup>

Davies would assert that church buildings are necessary, but not essential for the worship of God. Instead, they are necessary for service to mankind. However, it would seem that this second position as seen through the work of Davies is still only at best primarily a limited or localized service. It can only serve a minimal number of persons. Much of our world exists without the luxury of a church building nearby, and most of our world exists in such poverty and sickness that the primary need for those areas is not for this kind of "service-center". But certainly Davies' statements apply to our nation and his own, England, and we would do well to place this book before every local congregation.

The third position is quite daring, but seems to be very close to the example of Jesus. It can be summarized as a kind of outward directed action, that ignores the needs and reasons for the institutional and visible church. Colin Morris writes,

The church has succumbed to that disease of senility, hording. We have stored away our substance, building ever bigger barns, paying out our resources with judicious care within the framework of certified balance-sheets, weighing what we can afford to give today against the needs of tomorrow.<sup>26</sup>

Certainly, Morris has hit upon a very real problem in the church. We cannot continue to build large rooms, which are designed in such a manner that they can be used for only a limited number of purposes. Likewise, we cannot invest in any building, if it means that our work in the world is not fully realized because of our investment in buildings.

The first approach is not appropriate, nor is it ethical. To build a large structure for worship, which can only be used for worship, is to be irrelevant and luxurious.

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 206-207

<sup>26</sup>Colin Morris, Include Me Out (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 89

To build a large structure for worship today means that the church ignores the role of servant to a world in need. If one is considering the ethical priorities involved in a church building project, then one must reject the first approach in favor of a balance between the second and third approaches.<sup>19</sup>

A balance between the second and third approaches is required today. Certainly, we need the visible church and we need some sort of organizational structure, for without organization one can do very little in our complex and rapidly changing world. But we must adopt a life style that includes the dynamic of risk, for we cannot simply plan for tomorrow without any consideration for the problems of today. In short, when it comes time for a church to build, those involved must build only that kind of structure which can be utilized much of the week and by most of the community as a "service-center". And when a local congregation decides to build, it must be certain that a large portion of its money goes way out beyond the walls of its building, to persons in desperate need.

The approach described above can be visualized through a recent financial campaign. One particular congregation decided to tithe its mortgage fund, and give that amount to others beyond the walls and direct reaches of the congregation.<sup>27</sup> This particular congregation, without waiting for the mortgage to be fully paid, is giving ten percent away to persons in serious need. This approach must be adopted by congregations, for if they were to wait till the mortgage was paid off, many persons they could be serving would not be alive to reap the benefits later on after the mortgage has been paid. Perhaps J. G. Davies, in his most helpful book, has found the proper balance. Davies writes,

At the present day there are many social agencies that recognize the need to do some of the things that are proposed for a multipurpose church; but they cannot do them for lack of accommodation, finance, etc. The Church must then undertake these particular forms of service; in time these, too, may be assumed by secular agencies, and the Church, having fulfilled its pioneer task, will be grateful. Part of the Church's role is, then, to identify human need and meet it now. How to live the life of Christ in the world is to be determined by the contemporary world and not by the world of yesterday or tomorrow.<sup>28</sup>

The church is to exist for service, and it can perform much of its service through the full utilization of its buildings, but, if any program can be more fully undertaken outside the church building, then the church will die to that which has been in operation and start afresh. Not worrying about tomorrow and forgetting the past will allow the church to serve the today.

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<sup>27</sup>Rose City Park United Methodist Church of Portland, Oregon

<sup>28</sup>Davies, op. cit., pp. 247-248

The church visible and active means much more than being on a specific corner with the name of the church on a sign for all to read. We need to learn that the church can be just as visible working in the lives of people, as it can be on the corner of First and Main streets. The kind of visibility that will keep the church alive and witness to others that it practices what it preaches is that which will send the church out into the lives of people in need. J.C. Hoekendijk writes directly to this, when he says,

If someone asks where the church is, then we ought to be able to answer: there, where people are emptying themselves, making themselves as nothing; there, where people serve, not just a little, but in total service which has been imitated from the Messiah—Servant, and in which the cross comes into view; and there, where the solidarity with the fellowman is not merely preached but is actually demonstrated.<sup>29</sup>

The church is called to be visible, but our belief has been all too often that visibility as seen only through a church building. Our belief has been “there is the church”, “we go to church”, and “we do church things when we are in the building”. It is this “hang up” with the church building that has kept us from doing our work in the community among people in need.

J.C. Hoekendijk applies service not only to buildings but, also, to the church budget. He writes.

In some countries people will speak of a “mature” church only when more than 50 percent of the available funds and people are used and assigned for the “others” who are outside the church.<sup>30</sup>

Almost all the churches in our country, it would be safe to say, are far below this fifty percent figure that Hoekendijk suggests. This forces us to reconsider whether or not our churches are really mature or, in Hoekendijk terminology, self-emptying. Hoekendijk applies this fifty percent figure both to the financial and to the assignment of people for social action.

Surprisingly Hoekendijk even goes further than fifty percent. He writes,

That is already quite a bit, and one hesitates to think what the result would be if this standard were applied. But now, from the perspective of the Messianic community, would that be enough; 51 percent for others, is that self-emptying?<sup>31</sup>

His question leaves us a long way to go, but his question leaves us with a goal that must be reached if the church is to transform and save the world. Hoekendijk compares the church to the example of the Messiah-Servant, an example which most assuredly must be held up

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<sup>29</sup>J. C. Hoekendijk, The Church Inside Out (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966)  
p. 71

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 72

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

before us. What will we do with that example?

Not only must the church become self-emptying as understood by Hoekendijk, but the worship experience must be designed so that the congregation will understand the goal of self-emptying, and find ways to implement this goal. Not only must the church realize that visibility occurs when the church is in mission, but visibility, as well, must become such that the church goes with the people. Ours is a mobile age, and, consequently, people will increasingly need places and times to worship that takes into consideration this mobility. Davies writes,

The ideal of the Liturgical Movement of the people of God gathered together regularly in one place no longer corresponds with this sociological situation. Because our society is mobile and pluriform, our services must be pluriform and must take place wherever people come together in secular society. I am indeed pointing to the present structural crisis of the Church, which devised its structures and their corresponding acts of worship for a static society which is no longer with us.<sup>32</sup>

Davies confronts us with a most profound challenge, one which seems to question the parish system that is at the heart of the American church scene. For example, we build a large sanctuary for the worship of God, only to find it half full each week because many of the members are at the beach or the mountains. Davies suggests that we need to travel with the crowd, so to be where the action is. This has been done by several denominations and by the National Council of Churches, but never for a long enough time to cultivate any lasting results.

Another understanding of the church building can be seen in an article by John M. Cates, Jr. Cates suggests that the church building in the urban setting needs to go underground. Cates believes that the church for a long time spoke to and witnessed to people through its steeple and spire, which rose far above the small city or rural flatland. But now with large urban centers, the steeple goes unnoticed by most if not all who live in the city. Cates suggests that the church building should go underground, and on the surface should be located a public park. He writes,

Let the church be below ground, with its roof a park, slightly sunken or on street level. Then will this "church space" be in as striking contrast with the surrounding landscape of skyscrapers, as the traditional steeple was in contrast to the flat country and lowly cottages around it.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>John Gordon Davies, "The Missionary Dimension of Worship", *Studia Liturgica* VI:2 (1969), 83

<sup>33</sup>John M. Cates, Jr., "The Steeple Goes to Ground", *Liturgical Arts*, XXXVII:4 (August 1969), 108

Certainly, Cates does not consider making the church mobile, as does J. G. Davies, for Cates wants to plant the church building deep in the earth. But at least he sees an expanded role for the church building which would seek visibility in a different way. Cates writes,

In addition to providing a place for a bit of greenery, a place for the weary to rest, and a bit of open space and breathing room in the immensity of our multi-floored giants, this open space would permit a great shaft of light from the heavens to find its way down among the city canyons—a luminous finger of God bringing light and a sense of comfort from the heavens above to man below.<sup>34</sup>

The suggestion of Cates to take the church underground will not be the only change proposed for the church in the future, but it suggests one approach to a new understanding of the church building.

At the close of his article, Cates writes,

In terms of the community image of the church, whether the air-space were devoted to community recreational use as a park, or to a source of community taxable property, as in commercial use, the community would be more aware of the church's contribution to the community's daily, non-spiritual needs, as well as to the church's ceremonial-spiritual needs. In either event, the church would benefit.<sup>35</sup>

This position may be a far cry from the position held by J. C. Hoekendijk, and it may be a very long time before local congregations reach the point, but Cates' position indicates a creative struggle with the problem of the church building.

Cates' concern is my concern, for social concern is important, but so, too, is the need and necessity for worship. Cates says of this, "what is important is that adequate, appropriate worship space be provided, but in such a manner as to be in keeping with the everyday life and needs of the community."<sup>36</sup> And J. G. Davies cannot see how worship and mission can be considered in anything but differing aspects of the same act. Cates, while stressing the importance of a localized, stable place for worship, cannot forget or ignore the community about the church building and its needs, as well as the needs of the worshipping community.

In closing this chapter, I cannot help but stating that many in the field of worship and mission see for the two an even closer relationship in the days ahead. Such a close relationship suggests that the order of worship will be taking its agenda from the needs

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid. See also Peter Hammond (ed.) Towards a Church Architecture (London: Architectural Press, 1961), pp. 15-37.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

and problems of the world, and the style, size, and structure of the church building will, also, be governed by the needs and problems of the day. Worship is related to people, and so closely related to people that worship and the place it occurs will both be determined by the ethical priorities the church sets for itself.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE MINISTER AS WORSHIP MANAGER

Many tasks have been assigned to the professional minister. Administrator, counselor, leader, spiritual father, preacher, and organizer are just a few of the many titles given to the minister. Some of these are old, while others are relatively new. All certainly relate yet today to the parish minister.

Often omitted from the list is reference to the minister as worship leader, or perhaps a better term, worship manager. The term, "worship manager" came to mind while reading Douglas McGregor's book, The Professional Manager.<sup>1</sup> His new understanding of a manager's role and of the managerial relationship led me to correlate his thought with the need for more participational worship experiences. The purpose of this chapter, then, will be to discover the techniques of worship management, to develop those techniques, and to discover their relationship to the needs present in those who worship.

We must come to a new understanding of the role of the worship leader, or manager, for worship is at the heart of the church reformation movement. The so-called renewal of worship has been going on for some ten or twelve years now. The first phase of the movement pointed out the problems, offered many criticisms, but did not present many new ideas or models for worship. A good example of this phase is the now famous book, The Comfortable Pew. In his book Pierre Berton writes,

The answer may be that the Church's outer shell of liturgy, ritual, and myth has become fossilized. In the matter of language, for instance, the Church has become a prisoner of its own cliches. Words like immanent, justification, sanctification, atonement, witness . . . and many, many others are as obscure to non-churchgoers as the jargon of Madison Avenue is incomprehensible to the clergy. It is no use saying that people should know what these words mean; the truth is that they don't know.<sup>2</sup>

The problem as presented by Berton is that the words and forms used in the worship service are just not understandable to modern man.

Berton goes on to point up a concern he has with the sermon, and its lack of connection with the present. He writes,

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<sup>1</sup>Douglas McGregor, The Professional Manager (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967)

<sup>2</sup>Pierre Berton, The Comfortable Pew (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1965), p. 92

That many sermons of today tend to be spiritless, irrelevant, dull, and badly delivered, there can be little doubt. Almost all the sermons my observer took down in shorthand could have been preached with scarcely a comma changed a century ago. Some ministers may wonder what is so wrong with that since the Christian message is itself eternal. But surely eternal messages ought to be expressed in contemporary idioms and with contemporary techniques if they are to be understood.

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Here, Berton touches on a subject that we will explore later in this chapter.

It would seem that the second phase of the renewal movement attacked the church, its closed doors, and lack of concern for those other than church members. It, also, took on the professional ministry and was quick to point up its weaknesses. Berton could here again be cited as an example, but a better example would be the book, Who's Killing the Church? One of the contributors to this small volume writes,

The complexity of a new society emerging under the impact of urbanization can be understood as God at work pushing us to realize that the church has no ministry if it lacks genuine involvement in the world. We are being forced to understand that it is totally false to place the church against the world. There is one reality—the world.<sup>4</sup>

In these words, Robert Strom has called the church into the world, as have so many, and demanded that the church become the servant of the entire community and world. Strom goes on to write that the minister, "... insecure in his vocational identity, often attempts conforming to traditional clergy roles in establishing his place in society. Such attempts are sure to fail".<sup>5</sup> The clergymen cannot wear his clerical collar and expect everyone to flock to him for advice and respect. Instead, the collar must become a symbol of the minister representing the church in the peace demonstration or racial confrontation.

The present phase can be known for its hope and confidence in new forms of worship, coupled with new forms of missionary and social action outreach. The worship service has been given new birth by the Holy Spirit, that says, "Come, let us go to the house of the Lord to worship, then let us go out to witness and to serve as disciples of the man who came to serve all people".

Worship that is alive and responsive to the struggles of our day is described by the minister-professor, Keith Watkins. The title alone of his book, Liturgies in a Time

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 96

<sup>4</sup>Stephen Rose (ed.), Who's Killing the Church? (Chicago: Chicago City Missionary Society, 1966), p 14

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

When Cities Burn, suggests a type of liturgy, that is, worship, which is alive to the problems and needs of the day. He does not suggest that we should abandon the service or worship, and try some other approach. He simply suggests that worship must be connected to the world. Watkins writes about worship and says,

When purged of its demonic traits Christian worship embodies a tragic vision of life, including anguish and victory, and incorporates people into a community whose common life manifests this sacrificial quality.<sup>6</sup>

Watkins suggests a type of liturgy that connects the past Christian tradition with the needs and events of the present world. This community reference made in the above quotation is at the foundation of McGregor's managerial style.

Watkins introduces another point that we must consider in the style of worship manager we are seeking to develop. He writes,

The structure of contemporary life is such that the most significant expressions of the energies of us are the institutions in which we work and achieve our goals for ourselves and society.<sup>7</sup>

This point must be understood fully, for it is at the heart of the managerial style of operation that McGregor holds to be essential.

Turning to management theory and the work of Douglas McGregor, we can begin to find hope for the worship experience and for the person charged with the responsibility of managing the service. McGregor writes about a new understanding of the manager's role,

The role of the manager can be visualized as a dynamic interplay between environmental forces and pressures operating on the manager (E variables) and the forces originating from within the manager, his values, personality, and aspirations (the I variables).<sup>8</sup>

McGregor sees the manager as a team member interacting with other team members, and with his environment beyond the team—in the case of this chapter, the church and the world.

The worship manager must begin to build a core group which is charged with the responsibility of preparing the worship experience. For many years one man, in most worship services, prepared the service, and with a few select aides led the service. In

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<sup>6</sup>Keith Watkins, Liturgies in a Time When Cities Burn (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 46.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 65-66. Harvey Seifert, Power Where the Action Is (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), makes this point clear when he must work through the existing church institution to get real action.

<sup>8</sup>McGregor, op. cit., p. 55

the Protestant tradition, the ushers and acolytes, plus a few key leaders, were asked to help lead the service, while most persons sat in their pews and listened, not having much more to do than try to stay awake. Input into the service came from the feelings, beliefs, practices, or hang-ups of one man. This style of worship preparation can be closely paralleled in the old style of management theory, which placed one man at the top, giving out orders and running the operation as he alone saw fit. However, worship, to be meaningful, needs to speak to the needs and concerns of those who worship, and not to the one who prepared the service.

A new type of worship preparation is needed, one that will consider the needs, emotions, actions, and beliefs of all who gather to worship. A core group charged with worship preparation can make worship an experience that speaks to the needs of most of the members of the congregation present for worship. The worship manager is a part of that team charged with certain responsibilities, but he is not the only functionary.

This core group approach has been used effectively by Browne Barr on that part of the service which is the sermon. He has tried to develop a group, charged with the responsibility of helping prepare the sermon for the week ahead. He has seen the need for his laymen to help him prepare the sermon, to struggle through as to what a certain given text from scripture means and how it should be presented. Barr writes,

In our parish we are experimenting with what is called a "sermon seminar", in an effort to bring these various concerns under an appropriate and creative discipline —a coming together, in which the benefits of mutual support are directed by the unfolding of the Word . . .<sup>9</sup>

Persons study the texts to be used, discuss the themes with others, and then come together on a certain night to discuss and dialogue with the minister regarding what they feel the text for the week is all about. Those who come to the sermon seminar divide into smaller groups for part of the evening to discuss, through personal encounter with one another, the text. In these smaller groups, things begin to happen.

It is here that the congregation begins to prepare the sermon; but in the process witnessing and confession and doubting and support have taken place. Sometimes Christian discipline and rebuke have been experienced profitably; and in the sermon seminar, care is always taken to see that each person is established as a person with a name . . .<sup>10</sup>

This brief exposure to Browne Barr's sermon seminars gives us an example of what a worship

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<sup>9</sup>Browne Barr, Parish Back Talk (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1964), p. 76

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 77

manager should be doing with respect to the entire service. It must be a tremendous experience for those who had a part in the planning to participate in the worship on Sunday. This is the beginning of real participational worship, worship that has meaning since it comes from the people and from God.

One description of the worship manager that seems to be very appropriate here is found in an article by Jeanne Richie, "The Unresponsive Pew". She writes about the new parish minister and says, "his role will be more like that of a railroad dispatcher than of a general of the armies".<sup>11</sup> She was referring here to the outreach of the church, and the minister as the dispatcher sending persons out to action. But this can apply to the service of worship as well, for the worship manager is the dispatcher who sends his people out from worship to action. He can dispatch them out, insofar as the service of worship has been meaningful to those who have gathered. It will be more meaningful because the core team has prepared, along with the worship manager, a service that speaks to the needs of a majority of people.

We have talked about the worship group, but we still need to define in more detail the role of the worship manager in that group. Developing management strategy is of the essence for the worship manager.

The manager must seek to become like Maslow's self-actualizing man. McGregor writes about this self-actualizing man as an appropriate managerial style. This self-actualization managerial motivational characteristic is an important concept for the worship manager. McGregor writes about this,

Self-actualization . . . is a term that describes the full utilization of human capacities to perceive, feel, learn, acquire skill, exercise intellectual capacities, create, love—in short, to grow toward the full realization of human endowments. A biological plant, under the proper environmental conditions, actualizes the potentialities inherent in the seed from which it sprang.<sup>12</sup>

This core group for worship preparation can make and prepare a more meaningful service of worship for all who gather to worship, and it can, also, help the worship manager develop his fullest potentials as a part of that group.

Maslow sees these self-actualizing persons as ones appropriate for the worship managerial role. I have already mentioned that the worship core group can help the

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<sup>11</sup> Jeanne Richie, "The Unresponsive Pew", Christian Century LXXXVI:41 (October 8, 1969), 1281

<sup>12</sup> McGregor, op.cit., p. 75

worship manager become a more self-actualized personality, and it is this quality of personality that is needed. The worship manager must be one open to the struggles and suggestions of the core group. Browne Barr has described the sermon seminar group, as a group that must struggle together to come up with the sermon. Many a traditional preacher would think it an insult to even consider the possibility of laymen advising him about the sermon, but the self-actualized manager can be open to lay suggestions. Maslow writes,

All subjects without exception may be said to be democratic people in the deepest possible sense. These people have all the obvious or superficial democratic characteristics. They can be, and are, friendly with anyone of suitable character of class, education, political belief, race, or color. As a matter of fact, it often seems as if they are not even aware of these differences . . .<sup>13</sup>

This description by Maslow is the kind of worship manager needed, who can participate as a team member in a core group charged with worship preparation. Self-actualized persons can participate in the democratic process, which must be at the center of a worship preparation group. Granted the trained clergy may at times decide upon a prayer to eliminate from a prepared service because of its lack of theological quality, but the self-actualized worship manager is the kind of person who can usually accept a group decision as to the content of the liturgy. Maslow writes, "they have not only this most obvious quality but their democratic feeling goes deeper, as well. For instance, they find it possible to learn from anybody . . .<sup>14</sup>

Let us go one step further, and look once again to the work of McGregor and the self-actualized personality. McGregor feels that a linking can take place between self-actualization and the goals of an organization. This would be especially important for the church, and the group charged with worship preparation. In talking about this linkage, McGregor writes,

Strategy planning that takes into account this assumed human characteristic can lead both to a better society and to a more effective organization in sheer economic terms. It is a way of tapping latent resources of creativity, skill, and knowledge that are otherwise unavailable to the organization.<sup>15</sup>

The goal of preparing the service of worship is primary, but in the process many will achieve self-actualization. Self-actualization in the lives of the group members can help to build a stronger spirit of community, such a spirit being one of the primary goals of the worship experience. For the strength that comes from a community relationship is the kind of strength

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<sup>13</sup> Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), pp. 219-220

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 220

<sup>15</sup> McGregor, op.cit., p. 77

that enables participants to carry out their Christian discipleship. John Wesley knew this long ago, in his small study-class groups. The discipline that came from the small community feeling enabled his followers to go out to meet the needs of the people of his day.

The worship manager can help persons through the group to their fullest potential (self-actualization), and along the way his own self-actualization will be enhanced. The core group seeks, then, to prepare the service of worship, and with this process comes a personal growth within the total group. McGregor writes,

... one of the fundamental characteristics of an appropriate managerial strategy is that of creating conditions which enable the individual to achieve his own goals (including those of self-actualization) best by directing his efforts toward organizational goals.<sup>16</sup>

The organizational goals of worship preparation enable persons to become self-actualized personalities.

While preparing worship for the total congregation, the group has the opportunity to experience that which they are trying to develop for the congregation. As persons are drawn out into their fullest potential, they become motivated to do the work of the church wherever they may be.

Developing fullest potential in persons enables them to become more aware and more open.<sup>17</sup> This awareness is a tremendous power or source for social action.

This awareness is not only a recognition of a power outside ourselves; it is a heightened sensitivity to the intrapersonal and the interpersonal experiences of the worshiper. We are equipped together for each other and for all others. To be alive in His life becomes a central act in actualizing worship.<sup>18</sup>

The worship manager is still the ordained minister of the congregation, but with work and time he can become less and less the one all will depend upon. The United Methodist Church of La Habra developed and began a Monday night personal encounter worship service that everyone assumed would be led by the ministers. Some got the shock of their lives when they found out that the ministers were not going to lead the services. After several months, the ministers were accepted as equals by those who regularly participate in the service. The "laymen" take on most of the responsibility for the services, and most weeks the service is presided over entirely by laymen.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 78

<sup>17</sup>Maslow, op. cit., p. 220

<sup>18</sup>Maxie Dunnam, Gary Herbertson, Everett Shostrom, The Manipulator and The Church (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 115

The minister can and needs to be the manager, but his role should be similar to that which McGregor writes about: "he is an expert source of help, a technical adviser, a teacher, a troubleshooter by demand of the group. He does not control, discipline, and direct in the traditional sense".<sup>19</sup> The worship manager is a member of the team, assigned numerous tasks, and reacts interdependently with the rest of the core group.

The core group must, also, have youth on the team. Some of the best musical ideas come from the youth. Some of the most innovative ideas come from youth, who want a change in worship. Many youth have the most potential for creativity in preparing new forms of worship, and they are the ones that need, also, to feel a part of the community sense that will certainly develop in the core group. Youth and adults working together, with their worship manager, will become a group that can begin the reformation of the local church and to break down the barriers that exist within a local church.

The worship preparation group does not end its task when the service is over. Of course, the core group has the responsibility for the following week services. But it, also, has another responsibility, that is to respond to the service, especially the sermon. The talk-back forum has just begun to become a part of many Sunday church programs. I am aware of the position of Browne Barr, that the sermon should not be discussed right after it is given, but if the core group is to have any vital and lasting role, it must have the opportunity to respond at some time. Barr has a strong position of opposition to the talk back. He has written,

The sermon . . . is far more than a religious address; it is an instrument which anchors us in that which is beyond us and reveals that "the light we see is the Light by which we see". When that happens, life is changed, renewed, refreshed . . . And when that does happen, who in heaven's name is then ready to go off into a room somewhere and analyze the instrument of his renewal.<sup>20</sup>

He has a point, but I believe that not to focus in on the main points of the sermon is to take too much for granted. The sermon must have "its day in court". If one is to be renewed by the experience of the sermon, then it had better be analyzed, so that one's renewal is based upon the word of God and not upon some false prophet.

Let us look at one church's talk-back forum and evaluate its usefulness in being part of a core group experience. I utilized excerpts from a "Report on Talk-Back Ses-

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<sup>19</sup>McGregor, op. cit., p. 90

<sup>20</sup>Browne Barr "Pop Sermons", Christian Century LXXXVI:38 (September 17, 1969), p. 1191

sion". The paper begins with a description of the church involved and of the purposes of the experiment.

The First United Methodist Cathedral of Boise, Idaho, added experimentally a half-hour talk-back session chaired by the preacher of the morning and moderated by several laymen. It was arranged under the direction and consultation of the Church School Superintendent, and is under the educational direction of the church.

The reasons for the talk-back are several:

1. Previous administration of program had been largely authoritarian in pattern emanating from the clergy with commissions meeting only once or twice a year, and lay participation involving mostly assigned duties as teachers, ushers, and the like.
2. The communication level in the church was low, with most presentations being of a monologue nature. No place for feed back to the pastors that allows the give and take of joint program development, evaluation, and adjustment.
3. The talk-back approach seemed a modest and modified beginning within the understanding of a congregation typed in the above manner, and the first step toward opening up several procedures by which leadership and responsibility shifts to the laity with the clergy serving as resource persons, consultants, and coaches, but with the laity as the real team.<sup>21</sup>

It is interesting to note that one of the hoped-for results (see numbers 2 and 3 above), is to build up a sense of team spirit, with the ministers as team members, called to be resource persons. This sense of team spirit can, also, be called in more traditional terms the priesthood of all believers. We cannot forget the work of Martin Luther, and the strong emphasis in much of the Lutheran tradition, on the priesthood of the laity. The need for a core group in worship preparation can be this full utilization of the priesthood of all.

A Lutheran writes about the "holy people".

I do not think that we shall ever find the right proportion between tradition and renewal in the liturgy if we do not succeed in establishing a new and fruitful co-operation in the Church between the ministry and the lay people. The contribution of the lay people is not only to be made outside the Church, in the "ordinary" weekday life, but inside the Church, at the very heart of the liturgy.<sup>22</sup>

It is this very traditional element of the Reformation that rests at the heart of my conviction that worship preparation must come from the core group and not from one or two ministers alone.

This core group must reflect the entire congregation, not simply a group of persons with one single thought and belief in mind. In other words, the minister should not select the core group, and he should not try to slant the group in one particular direction.

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<sup>21</sup>Daniel E. Taylor, "Report on Talk-Back Session", First United Methodist Cathedral, Boise, Idaho (Mimeographed), October 17, 1969

<sup>22</sup>Regin Prenter, "Tradition and Renewal in the Liturgy", Response VIII:1 (Pentecost, 1968), 11.

This goes back to the basic belief of McGregor, that finds the manager as participant along with the rest and not as overlord directing and commanding. The core group must, also, keep in mind the congregation it is a part of, and not remove itself from the needs, beliefs, and traditions of that particular congregation. In a recent book on modern worship, the warning is given, "in team preparation it is very easy to forget the congregation, and so every effort should be made to incorporate them into the service".<sup>23</sup>

Worship becomes enthusiastic and meaningful, only when it is participational, both in the sense that the core group prepares the service, and in the sense that there is no audience during the worship happening. Prenter sums this up in a question, "but we may ask quite seriously if we have not lost an essential element in the worship of the people of God if there is nothing at all left of the charismatic element belonging to the priesthood of all believers".<sup>24</sup> It is this charismatic element, or if you will, enthusiasm, on the part of the laity and the minister that makes worship contagious and necessary.

The importance of participation by the entire congregation becomes clear, also, when we voice the question, "why worship?" Again I turn to the work of McGregor and Maslow, as one of many, to find an answer. Maslow has discovered within the personality of man two sets of needs and rewards—*intrinsic* and *extrinsic*. Worship is more concerned with the *intrinsic* needs and rewards, but that does not mean that the *extrinsic* is completely lacking. McGregor writes about the *intrinsic*,

Intrinsic rewards . . . are inherent in the activity itself. The reward is the achievement of the goal . . . achievements of knowledge or skill, or autonomy, of self-respect, of solutions to problems, are examples. So are some of the rewards associated with genuine altruism: giving love and help to others.<sup>25</sup>

Achieving a goal, as McGregor points out, is an *intrinsic* reward. This achieving of a goal is central to the worship experience. There may be debate as to what the goal or goals of worship are, or should be, but there is little disagreement on the belief that there must be some goal to worship.

It is my conviction that a primary goal of worship is reconciliation. For reconciliation brings persons together, breaks down the barriers of division that seem to sep-

<sup>23</sup>Richard Jones (ed.) Worship for Today (London: Epworth Press, 1968), p. 128

<sup>24</sup>Prenter, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>25</sup>McGregor, op. cit., p. 7.

arate so many persons today, and develops a sense of community. The entire congregation should experience and participate in this act of reconciliation. It is only when reconciliation takes place in the local congregation that the participants can go out to reconcile the rest of the world.

Reconciliation in worship becomes a motivational or driving force for those who have experienced it. Maslow writes about motivation,

So far as motivational status is concerned, healthy people have sufficiently gratified their basic needs for safety, belongingness, love, respect, and self-esteem so that they are motivated primarily by trends to self-actualization (defined as ongoing actualization of potentials, capacities, and talents, as fulfillment of mission or call, fate, destiny, or vocation) . . .<sup>26</sup>

It is when the lower needs of a person are gratified that higher needs and rewards become central to motivation. McGregor writes “ . . . when lower level needs are reasonably well satisfied, successively higher levels of needs become relatively more important as motivators of behavior”.<sup>27</sup> Reconciliation in worship can have an extrinsic reward quality that carries on into intrinsic rewards, which then allows the worship participant to go out to reconcile the world.

In the last page of Maslow's book, he makes reference to this motivational aspect and gives clear warning to some who would operate without this understanding.

It is true that the lower need gratifications can be bought with money; but when these are already fulfilled, then people are motivated only by higher kinds of “pay” – belongingness, affection, dignity, respect, appreciation, honor – as well as the opportunity for self-actualization and the fostering of the highest values – truth, beauty, efficiency, excellence, justice, perfection . . .

There is obviously much to think about here, not only for the Marxian or the Freudian, but, also, for the political or military authoritarian or the ‘bossy’ boss . . .<sup>28</sup>

In the words of this last paragraph, we find a warning given to the minister who does not operate in terms of the worship manager approach. Motivation develops in a climate where persons are given the opportunity to grow and learn, and to accomplish their tasks in a team spirit with a manager to coach the team and act as a resource.

Reconciliation, we have already stated, is central to the worship experience. How does this reconciliation take place, and what kind of service should the worship team

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<sup>26</sup> Abraham Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1962), p. 25

<sup>27</sup> McGregor, op. cit., p. 11

<sup>28</sup> Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, p. 222

seek to prepare? The team must find its own answer to the above question, but certainly much can be found of value in the celebration of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is that kind of experience that brings about reconciliation for those who participate. If reconciliation does not take place, then the Lord's Supper has not been fully understood nor been participated in properly.

The Eucharist is not the automatic answer, for in its history much has been distorted. At one time it was celebrated for the benefit of the clergy alone. Granted, they are probably the group that need it the most, but this individual celebration defeats the purpose of the Eucharist. In its most extreme perversion, it was celebrated for the dead, with no other persons being present. So, if we are to think of the Eucharist as a method for the management of differences, the resolution of conflict, or the bringing about of reconciliation, then we must concern ourselves with a celebration that involves all the congregation. But such a celebration involving large numbers of people can at times become simply a performance and mean nothing to the large crowd gathered for the service. Here is where the small group approach, the core group already mentioned, and multiple worship services must be utilized.

Reconciliation must take place among those who are a part of the core group for worship preparation, before they can plan a service that will bring others together. John DeWitt writes about this concern in observing large congregations celebrating the Eucharist. He writes about the small group and its celebration together as a necessary factor for a meaningful experience.

Only by doing this first in small groups can we hope to transform our Sunday morning phenomenon into a united celebration of the Eucharist, the most intensive event of human life, and our only hope.<sup>29</sup>

The small group experience first enables persons to find meaning in a large gathering where intimacy is supposed to be crucial. The core group must become a reconciled group before it can help others to become reconciled.

Turning to the early church, we come to find an understanding of the Eucharist and of the presider over the celebration, that can bring new life to the Lord's Supper today. The role of the bishop is important to an understanding of the Eucharist, for the

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<sup>29</sup>John DeWitt, "Making a Community Out of a Parish", Cross Currents XVI:2 (Spring 1966), 211.

early bishop as presider may just be the early counterpart of Douglas McGregor's professional manager. Gregory Dix writes about the bishop and his necessary presence as the representative of Christ in the Eucharistic celebration. Here the bishop has been given a symbolic role to play, and we must separate this role from the conception we may have of bishops today, who often times become the authoritarian figure which is far from McGregor's understanding of manager. But turning to Dix's own words, we can see this symbolic unifying role that needs to be recaptured today. In reference to the bishop:

Without the exercise of his "special liturgy" . . . there cannot be a valid eucharist, for the Body of Christ, the church, is not organically complete without him, and therefore cannot offer itself or fulfill itself in the eucharist. Anyone can baptise or hold an agape without the bishop; there is no question of validity in such a case, but it is not allowed to do so, for unity's sake and for discipline. These are things which pertain to the ecclesia and the whole life and unity of the ecclesia centre in the bishop as the representative of the Father and the special organ of the Spirit.<sup>30</sup>

This sense of unity and oneness must become central to the Eucharist of today, or reconciliation will not take place. We need to rediscover this sense of oneness and unity with the total congregation, that the bishop represented in the early church. Perhaps the core group can be that fire to rekindle the sense of unity and wholeness that is so lacking in our celebrations of the Lord's Supper today. We do not need one man to do this for us, as was the case with the bishop in the early church, but, instead, following the theme of this paper, we need the core group to become the leaven for the spirit of oneness that must be central to the Eucharist.

The bishop of the early church symbolized the united body of Christ, the Church, and his presence became a kind of facilitator for the management of differences. It seems that the early church was well aware of the differences and conflicts that arose between persons. The "kiss of peace" became central to the Eucharist, for it is an act almost impossible to enter into if one has a dispute or conflict with his neighbor who is, also, present. The bishop and elders of the early church were charged with mediating these disputes before the service could continue, or to solve the disputes and differences at special sessions.<sup>31</sup> We need to recapture the "kiss of peace" for our worship today. Dix writes, in describing the kiss of peace:

It is a striking instance . . . of the way in which the liturgy was regarded as the

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<sup>30</sup>Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy (London: Dacre Press, 1946), p. 99

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 106

solemn putting into act before God of the whole Christian living of the church's members, that all this care for the interior charity and good living of those members found its expression and test week by week in the giving of the liturgical kiss of peace among the faithful before the eucharist.<sup>32</sup>

The special sessions to settle disputes and the kiss of peace as central to the liturgy seem to be very close to McGregor's view of the manager and his team sitting down together to solve problems, and to develop a team spirit that utilizes most fully intrinsic motivational factors. McGregor in writing about this group says,

... the group can often yield decisions and problem solutions at a general level of performance superior to the sum of the outputs of the individual members operating separately . . . the members perceive the group to be a setting within which there are attractive opportunities to achieve many of their individual goals and to gain intrinsic rewards while at the same time contributing to the goals of the organization.<sup>33</sup>

It is within the group that disputes are reconciled, and that men come to their fullest potential. McGregor's managerial team brings out the fullest in those who participate, with the manager as mediator and guider, and not as "boss".

In the early church, it was the Eucharistic gathering that brought men together and developed the sense of community. The kiss of peace was central to Eucharistic preparation liturgy. This kiss of peace may still be used today; however, it will take different forms. For example, the offering of hands used in one contemporary Eucharistic service can be as effective. The instructions given to those who are preparing for communion are:

Receive one another by the offering hands. This offering is not the same as those greetings given in public by ordinary friends. This meeting of hands is a sign of God's forgiveness, His reconciliation with us and thereby our reconciliation with one another, banishing the power of past wrongs.<sup>34</sup>

It is here that we begin to see the power of the Eucharist in bringing about reconciliation. It is here that the celebration takes on a rehearsal for life. The Eucharist becomes a controlled experience under the direction of the minister and the core group, whereby persons experience reconciliation and oneness with the other participants and with God.

The instructions given by the worship liturgist preceding the above act of reconciliation in the offering of the hands are these:

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32 Ibid.

33 McGregor, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

34 Connie Parvey, "Woship at the University of Wisconsin", Response VIII:1 (Pentecost 1966), 48.

Let no one who has a quarrel with his brother meet together with you until they are reconciled, so that your fellowship with Christ in the meal of thanks may not be defiled. As it is written in the Gospel of Matthew . . . , it is a proper way in the fellowship that if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go: first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.<sup>35</sup>

This is what the Eucharist is all about, breaking down the barriers that exist between persons within the Christian Community. When these barriers are broken down within the community, then the community can go out into the world to break down the barriers that exist today. The Eucharistic liturgy then for those who participate fully becomes a rehearsal for life. It becomes a moment when participants experience the Kingdom of God, and are kindled to go out into the rest of the world and light a bigger fire.

It is in McGregor's managerial group that persons become identified with the team and become more than individuals. McGregor writes:

When an individual genuinely identifies himself with a group, a leader, or a cause, he is in effect saying that the goals and values associated with that cause have become his own. He then self-consciously directs his efforts toward those goals and gains intrinsic satisfaction through their achievements . . . if the identification is strong enough the individual will forgo many extrinsic rewards, he will risk censure, disapproval . . . in the service of the cause.<sup>36</sup>

The managerial team becomes the core group for worship preparation. It is this core group, working together with the worship manager, that seeks to build a worship experience that brings about reconciliation in those who participate. Then it becomes this experience of reconciliation that enables persons to go out from the worship service motivated to bring about reconciliation in all the world, for as Christians reconciliation is what we are to be about when doing our Father's Work.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 48. Dix in reference to Matthew 5:23-24, says that it was originally used as a liturgical offertory. At one time in the early church the call went out from the deacon, "Let none keep rancour against any. Let none give the kiss in hypocrisy". (Dix, p. 107).

<sup>36</sup>McGregor, op. cit., p. 145.

<sup>37</sup>II Corinthians 5.

## CONFRONTATIONAL WORSHIP: GOD AND THE WORLD AS CONTENT FOR WORSHIP

Involved in the ministry of the church is the dynamic of confrontation.

Confrontation has been a major factor in the counseling ministry of the church, especially in recent times. In reality therapy, for example, the principle of confrontation is utilized and is found at the center of its approach. Other forms of counseling, as well, utilize the dynamic of confrontation. Confrontation, likewise, takes place in church business meetings, especially when two differing sides clash in the quest of a decision. Unfortunately, confrontation has been used only to a small degree in the service of worship. When confrontation has been utilized, it has been delegated to a minor position in a short general prayer of confession, while it has been overlooked as a major and necessary element for effective worship. The dynamic of confrontation must become central to worship, in order to make worship responsive to needs of the day and appropriate to the kind of God we seek to worship.

What, then, is at the heart of the experience of Christian worship? The opening statement in one authoritative book on worship states, "Christian worship always is celebration. This is so because a victory is the basis of Christian worship."<sup>1</sup> But today we must ask the question, is victory at the core of what we call Christian worship? Certainly we would respond that God is victorious in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and this gives us something to celebrate. It would seem, however, that too much of our worship exists in a past event that has not been brought alive today. We can say that worship is victorious, and even try to act it out on Sunday morning for one hour, but the world about us can only challenge the victory and make such a creed hollow and unreal. It would be much more accurate to say that God is far from victorious in our world, and that if we do believe that he is victorious in our world, once and for all time, then it is very easy for us to take a back row seat for the action required to solve the problems of our world. We can then simply say that God has won, all will work out in the end, and all we need to do is wait till God comes again to give us our reward.

Out of a different perspective comes somewhat similar beliefs to my own.

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<sup>1</sup>H. Grady Hardin, Joseph Quillian, Jr., and James White, The Celebration of the Gospel (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1964), p. 13

James Cone writes,

Christianity came to the black man through white oppressors who demanded that he reject his concern for this world as well as his blackness and affirm the next world and whiteness.<sup>2</sup>

It is this concern for a future world that brings forth an attitude of little emphasis or importance for the present time. It is this attitude or theology that allows a person to sit back and do nothing but wait. Victory must certainly be expressed in the experience of worship, but to consider it the central or dominant theme is to delegate the problems and evils of our world, and the necessity of our own action, to a minor position and concern. Cone writes about God's concern for the here and now, and for the oppressed, by stating,

And the kingdom which the poor may enter is not merely an eschatological longing for escape to a transcendent reality, nor is it an inward serenity which eases unbearable suffering. Rather, it is God encountering man in the very depths of his being-in-the-world and releasing him from all human evils like racism, which hold him captive. The repentant man knows that though God's ultimate Kingdom be in the future, yet even now it breaks through like a ray of light upon the darkness of the oppressed.<sup>3</sup>

Confrontation must be central to the act of worship, so that persons may realize that they themselves have an urgent task to perform right now when so many persons are oppressed and treated as less than human. There exists a contradiction to be faced between conditions which are present, and the purposes of God for his world. The necessary confrontational dynamic is more than a single emphasis. Coupled with the present evils of our system is the demand for constructive social change to overcome our present evil system. A theology of confrontation says that man cannot sit back and wait for divine realization of God's perfect order, nor can he ignore the evil and oppression going on right now to prevent human fulfillment.

An example of confrontation through worship can be seen in a contemporary scattering-benediction.

#### Affirmation Through Dedication

**Leader:** You have heard the Word, you have heard the Word witnessed to, you have heard it questioned and challenged. Now, what kind of decision will you make about it? How will you respond to what has been done and said here? What will you do?

**People:** We will accept responsibility for social justice in our nation. We will de-

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p. 33. <sup>2</sup>James Cone, Black Theology and Black Power (New York: Seabury Press, 1969),

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 37

vote our minds and energies and resources to this task of achieving full citizenship for all Americans. We will pay the cost of the struggle. We will seek to be better informed about the problems and possible solutions. We will not accept the peace of oppression or injustice. We will do all we can to feel the beating of other human hearts beside our own. We will search for ways to be obedient to the call of God to brotherhood and concern. This is what we will do.

**Leader:** God is witness to your words.

**People:** Amen.<sup>4</sup>

The above closing liturgy of dedication is the kind of worship that confronts persons with action, and does not allow them to escape the challenge of worship. The above liturgy rings with the possibilities of new life and hope that could come through a change in our present social order. It is this change which confrontational worship seeks to bring about. This is the quality of change which comes about when those who worship seek to follow the ministry of Jesus as expressed in the words written in the book of Luke, in the fourth chapter, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me". It is that Spirit which requires a social action ministry as the end result of worship.<sup>5</sup>

The prayer of confession, if it is not too general, can be another opportunity for confrontation. However, it would seem that most prayers of confession are used with little understanding and creativity simply because they have always been used. In The Celebration of the Gospel, referred to earlier in the chapter, little space is given to an explanation of the prayer of confession, and perhaps this is a commentary on much of the confessional tradition in the Protestant church. Perhaps prayers of confession also come to have little value, because some have provided such powerful confrontation that persons have insisted that they be watered down to a more general quality and irrelevant concern. This attitude in worship has made it very difficult for any worship to take on a confrontational significance.

Not only is the prayer of confession usually minimized, but it is followed quickly by a declaration of pardon, or words of assurance and forgiveness, which immediately let those who participate "off the hook". Even renowned authorities fall into this error. For example, Hardin, Quillian, and White say, "Confession ought always to be followed by

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<sup>4</sup>David Randolph (ed.) Ventures in Worship (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 70

<sup>5</sup>Luke 4:18 and 19

an assurance of forgiveness. A scripture sentence may assure God's forgiveness, or a declaration of pardon in other than scriptural terms may be used.<sup>6</sup> Just at the point of becoming specific, where those who worship are challenged with the affirmation that all are sinners, the sting is taken out of the challenge by saying, "It's all right. God will forgive. There is a place for you in heaven." Perhaps contemporary worship cannot utilize the element of forgiveness or pardon quite so heavily, for there are so many things we are guilty of that we should not get "off the hook" quite so easily.

This relationship between confession and confrontation has been studied by Thomas Oden. He believes that confession must be a time of confrontation, for it provides the opportunity for the community gathered to worship to concern itself with, and to take responsibility for, a world where many do not take any responsibility. Oden writes, "There is a three-phased rhythm of repentance, thanksgiving, and intercession going on in Christian worship beneath the double movement of gathering and scattering."<sup>7</sup> The community gathers for worship to confess its own sin and shortcomings, and takes responsibility for the sin of the whole world. Not only is confession a time when the gathered community is confronted with its own action, or lack of it, but is, also, confronted by the sins of commission and omission for the whole world, even for persons who have no commitment to the Christian religion. Oden asserts that confrontation and awareness are central elements in confession.

Confession as confrontation and awareness is understood by Robert Raines to be related. Raines writes,

The basic movements are those of calling and sending. We are called out of darkness into his marvelous light; the corporate prayer of confession is the acknowledgment that God is even now calling us out of the darkness of our sins, and the sins of the whole world, into the light of his forgiveness and freedom. We are called in order that we may be sent, sent forth into the world to declare the marvelous deeds. There is a missionary thrust and urgency in the celebration.<sup>8</sup>

We are called together to confess what we have not done, and then we are sent out to meet human need with acts of compassion and mercy. Confrontation becomes a dynamic for con-

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<sup>6</sup>Hardin, Quillian, White, op. cit., p. 104

<sup>7</sup>Thomas Oden, The Community of Celebration (Nashville: Board of Education, The Methodist Church, 1964), p. 126

<sup>8</sup>Robert Raines, The Secular Congregation (New York: Harper and Row, 1968) p. 101

fessional prayer to awaken persons to the evils of the world and to work until these evils have been destroyed. Confession is a necessary element for worship, and must be developed in such a way that persons will be confronted through the prayer to the needs and problems of our day and confronted in such a way that they will act out their concern.

The prayer of confession can be confrontational when it is of specific quality. A generalized prayer of confession can be so vague that it never really speaks to the situation in which those who worship find themselves. Persons easily consider themselves too special, different, or above the rules to be confronted by means of a generalized confession. It is human nature to think of the wrongs that others do, and to forget that we, also, have committed wrongs. Generalized prayers of confession allow persons to escape into a world of "it's the other person" illusion. Confession in order to be confrontational must be specific, expose the self as sinner, present issues that touch the lives of each person present, and disturb the status quo. It is only when these qualities are included in the prayer that persons are confronted, challenged, and directed to personal involvement and action.

A good example of a contemporary prayer of confession that is specific and of a confrontational nature comes from the book, Interrobang.

- L. Lord, Jesus Christ,  
when we come to the empty tomb
- R. We see a hungry world before us,  
• the pain of starving children,  
the guilt of war on our hands,  
the terror of friends without rights,  
and we know that we share in these evils.
- L. Lord, Jesus Christ,  
when we come to the empty tomb
- R. We face you as never before,  
as the one forgotten,  
as the one oppressed,  
as the one pushed aside,  
as the one left out.<sup>9</sup>

The above confession can leave little doubt as to the problems and evils of our world, and it is written in such a way that it confronts those who read it with a sense of urgency and mission. A specific and relevant quality of confession is required to confront persons to Christian action.

In writing about the Holy Spirit, James Cone asserts,

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<sup>9</sup>Norman Habel, Interrobang (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p. 81.

Authentic living according to the Spirit means that one's will becomes God's will, one's actions become God's action. It could be that many will be excluded because their motives were ill founded. And this may mean that God is not necessarily at work in those places where the Word is truly preached and the sacraments are duly administered . . . but where the naked are clothed, the sick are visited, and the hungry are fed.<sup>10</sup>

Cone has selected the words of the fourth chapter of Luke to be a guide for those who seek to follow God, but for many who worship this guide may be much too difficult. At least they are not ready for such acts automatically as a result of hearing the word and experiencing the sacrament, unless something has "grabbed" them with such urgency that they cannot rest until they have given all to those who are oppressed. Confrontational worship through specific comments can help to bring about a life style as described in the fourth chapter of Luke.

Consider the following example of a traditional prayer of confession used by many congregations which does very little to inspire persons to urgency and commitment:

Have mercy upon us, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquities, and cleanse us from our sins. For we acknowledge our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us. Create in us clean hearts, O God, and renew a right spirit within us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen<sup>11</sup>

Certainly this prayer is excellent prose, but as an act of confrontation, it leaves much to be desired. It allows interpretation to suit the comfort of every sinner in the congregation. It does nothing to awaken us to those sins which we have mistakenly labeled as virtues. No wonder the worship service has done little to stir the conscience of those who worship.

Contrast the above general prayer of confession with a contemporary prayer that is certainly very specific.

Lord of all that is and is to be, sensitize our sight that we may see what really is and understand what ought to be. We confess that often we see only what we want to see. We strike for more vacations and benefits while thousands are cold, diseased, and poverty stricken. We believe no one can starve in America while children die of malnutrition in our own city. We speak of equal rights, education, and justice for all, but cannot feel the frustration of overcoming prejudice of race or nationality. We worry about saving face, honor, and money in a war costing hundreds of lives weekly. We think the world population should be controlled, but fail to support planned parenthood programs because they don't apply to us right now. We create technology but fail to control it. We complain about education but go to sleep in classes. We support studies of anti-pollution but burn trash daily. We enjoy the company of lively people but don't reach their loneliness. Lord, help us to see the inconsistency of our living and the distortions of life

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<sup>10</sup>Cone, op. cit., p. 59

<sup>11</sup>The Book of Worship (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1964), p. 173.

wherein we become destroyers rather than creators. Have mercy. Amen.<sup>12</sup>

The above prayer of confession illustrates the dramatic impact that specific references can effect. These specific contrasts are then able to confront persons to action and mission.

Not only must the prayer of confession be specific and somewhat disturbing, but, as mentioned briefly earlier, such prayers must be relevant and responsive to the problems and needs of the day. This concern is reflected clearly in the above contemporary prayer. Keith Watkins believes this relevancy to be important and writes, "the styles and moods of our time must somehow be sensed by those who plan and conduct worship".<sup>13</sup> Prayers of confession, as well as the entire service of worship, must be tuned in to the present day and its concerns. Watkins writes about this tuning in,

Prayers in the service should express this sensitivity to contemporary life, with petitions and intercessions, confessions and thanksgiving rising out of current life-experience.<sup>14</sup>

Sensitivity to the issues of our time through specific references, allows the prayer of confession to be a most important time for confrontation.

We have looked at the prayer of confession in some detail. Let us now turn to another part of worship for some additional insight into the possibilities for confrontation. The hymn can, also, be a time of confrontation. It is true that many hymns will not fit into this category, but an increasing number of contemporary hymns are of a confrontational quality. As with prayers of confession, hymns, in order to be confrontational, must be specific, disturbing to the status quo, present evils that are destroying humanness, and present a challenge to remember and to practice the ministry of Jesus.

Here is one example of such a hymn,

My Lord, My Lord, when I think of the wrongs, in this world  
I feel so blue; My Lord, My Lord, won't you tell me please,  
Tell me what do You want me to do. What will I do?

There are those who starve while I eat my fill, Lord it makes  
me feel so blue; They hunger and thirst, get no help when  
they're ill; Tell me what do You want me to do. What will I do?

There are those who suffer for the color of their skin, Lord it  
makes me feel so blue; 'Cos I'm sure we're all the same within;  
Tell me what do You want me to do. What will I do?

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<sup>12</sup>Randolph, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

<sup>13</sup>Keith Watkins, Liturgies in a Time When Cities Burn (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 75

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 76

Jesus lived and He died, you and me to save, Lord it makes me  
feel so blue; Did he go in vain to a borrowed grave? Tell me  
what do You want me to do. What will I do?

I must love my neighbor, my fellow man, Then I won't feel so  
blue, And help those in need as best I can, That's what my  
Lord wants me to do. That's what I'll do.<sup>15</sup>

The above hymn may not flow smoothly like a Bach chorale or measure up to a hymn by Charles Wesley, but it certainly is relevant to the problems of our day, and it suggests that action must result and not mere devotion.

Many of the hymns often sung by those in worship have little to say to a world in need. Instead, they are of a personal, individualistic, pietistic emphasis distorting human relationships with God and Jesus Christ. Robert Raines writes,

Many of the familiar hymns have an anti-world tone, or communicate an escapist, private salvation theology. One of dozens of examples that could be cited is the verse in the hymn, "Beneath the Cross of Jesus" — "content to let the world go by". When we subject the best-known and loved hymns of the congregation to secular screening, many of them are discovered to be, in theological terms, hindrance rather than help.<sup>16</sup>

It is this kind of hymn that distorts reality and may, in fact, prevent persons from entering into community and social action. A hymn used over and over again, after a while, most certainly, will affect a person's thought and action.

We have set the foundation for confrontational worship, in a study of several elements necessary for worship. Now, let us turn to another dynamic of confrontation that has been utilized in several services of worship, and most certainly needs to be used more often. That dynamic is illustrated by the presentation of the Black Manifesto. The Black Manifesto created much controversy and criticism during the middle months of 1969. Its suitability for worship, as well as its political, social, and theological implications, was questioned by most whites and some blacks. Many white laymen were almost to the point of barricading the doors to worship from the inside, to protect themselves from such an "evil" thought as the Black Manifesto. Many even said that financial giving decreased sharply after the Black Manifesto confrontation took place, and that many liberal churches were losing the more conservative thinking members. Much has happened and continues to occur as a result of the Black Manifesto confrontation, but it can be said that the Black Manifesto

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<sup>15</sup>Dean Kell (ed.), Hymns for Now (Chicago: Lutheran League, 1967), p. 19

<sup>16</sup>Raines, op. cit., p. 102

has brought to the church a much more urgent request than has been presented in many a year. The Black Manifesto has come to the church as a vehicle for God's Word to be spoken. James Cone writes about Black Power and says,

Like the people of Jesus' day, they will find it hard to believe that God would stoop so low as to reveal himself in and through black people and especially the "undesirable elements". If he has to make himself known through blacks, why not choose the "good Negroes"? But, that is just the point: God encounters men at that level of experience which challenges their being.<sup>17</sup>

And so God has chosen black people and a dynamic such as the Black Manifesto to confront and call white men back from their distorted and perverted understanding of the church. It may be very hard to accept and believe this to be the case, but with any kind of look at the church, one quickly realizes that the church has distanced itself from the ministry of Jesus and lost most of its concern for the oppressed. Dick Gregory writes about this distance between word and deed.

Basically, the Black Manifesto is an historical reminder to the white religious establishment. It points out the history of performance of white churches and synagogues and highlights the contradictions between words and deeds. Religious rhetoric has spoken of man's freedom and lifting the yoke of bondage, while the performance of the religious establishment has been to form an unholy alliance with a world-wide system of oppression.<sup>18</sup>

It is no wonder that most blacks feel and believe that the white church does not care about them or have any interest in them. When we realize how far the church has gone from the ministry of Jesus, we can see why black persons are angry and bitter towards the church. This anger, bitterness, and frustration over the gap between word and deed has caused God to confront the white church through the Black Manifesto. The Black Manifesto, then, can be seen as a contemporary call to man, just as the prophets of the Old Testament and the life of Jesus are vehicles whereby God makes his judgment known. However, this is not to be a theological inquiry into how God makes himself known, or his judgment felt, and it is not to be a theological debate with James Cone on black theology and Black Power. James Cone asserts, anyway, that black theology is not for white men and that any white response is unwelcome, if not impossible. But it is my concern to look instead at the Black Manifesto as a vehicle for confronting the white church to new forms of action on its part. It is my belief that such a dynamic as the Black Manifesto is a proper

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<sup>17</sup>Cone, op. cit., p. 61

<sup>18</sup>Dick Gregory, "Divine Libel", in Robert Lecky and H. Elliott Wright (eds.), Black Manifesto (New York: Sherd and Ward, 1969), p. 105.

model for confrontational worship.

Many whites responded to the Black Manifesto confrontation, with such comments as, "worship is a sacred activity not to be interrupted", "the shame of it all", "arrest those responsible", "worship is something calm, quiet, orderly, and reverent", and numerous other such statements. Ernest Campbell, the preaching minister at Riverside Church wrote, after James Foreman presented the Black Manifesto to that congregation, in response to those who felt such an activity was way out of line in worship,

Was it that corporate worship, a "top sacred" part of man's life had been desecrated by an illegal and hostile interruption? Let's be careful here—our hypocrisy may be showing. If worship means all that much to us, why do the majority of Christians in this country attend only when it suits them? Most church sanctuaries in this country could not seat their membership. Worship doesn't mean all that much to the average member. We sense that it should, but we know that it doesn't.<sup>19</sup>

These words certainly are on target, for we who are white believe worship to be important and necessary, but when it comes to putting this belief into practice, we fail. But the minute an outsider comes into our worship service to challenge us, we immediately affirm how important and sacred worship is to us. How quickly we forget the activities of Jesus. Jesus, we are told in Luke 4: 16-29, when he entered the synagogue worship service and spoke the words of God, almost found himself thrown over the side of a cliff by those claiming to worship God. Here again we find a large gap between our belief and our action.

As we look at the Black Manifesto as a confrontational model, let us remember what it is that James Foreman is saying to the white church. We have already stated that the church is the main target for the Manifesto, because of its nature as big business and its financial situation. Foreman stated in the Manifesto,

The new black man wants to live, and to live means that we must not become static or merely believe in self-defense. We must boldly go out and attack the white Western world at its power centers. The white Christian churches are another form of government in this country, and they are used by the government of this country to exploit the people of Latin America, Asia, and Africa, but the day is soon coming to an end.<sup>20</sup>

Boldly going out to attack the white church is most certainly the mood of the Black Manifesto.

If worship is to be responsive to the needs of the day and to be relevant to

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<sup>19</sup>Ernest Campbell, "The Case for Reparations", Theology Today XXVI:3, (October 1969), 271.

<sup>20</sup>Lecky and Wright, op. cit., p. 125

our lives, then confrontation must take a central place within worship. In one of Robert Raines' books, he writes,

The matter of shocking a congregation is ambiguous. Sometimes we ministers want to shock people just to show how "gutsy", or avant-gard, or unpious we are. But sometimes shock is a valid technique of breaking through the glazed congregational face and the stained-glass voice of the preacher.<sup>21</sup>

Shock or confrontation is most certainly a valid form of waking up the congregation. Any parish minister who has sat in the chancel area and looked out at the people as they worship, has often wondered, "Are the people really awake; is there life and breath and real flowing blood in those people out there?"

One parish pastor of a large congregation in a sermon commented on the necessity of confrontation. He stated that all too often we are of the position that all is to be well in worship. Worship and the church are places in which everyone agrees, is in harmony, and is kindly and polite. But he says this is not the case, nor should it be. Daniel Taylor had these words to say,

Suddenly, there appears throughout the Church a new breed, mostly of younger men and women, but not all, both laymen and women, and pastors, priests, and nuns. All these are saying, "Not so," and they break in unceremoniously upon whatever we are doing. Our prissy niceness, they say, isn't Christianity at all. Christianity is judgment, struggle, challenge, confrontation. Out of the agony of all this, creative change will come.<sup>22</sup>

Unless this agony, unceremonious action, and challenge can produce change, James Foreman had better forget the church and start shooting.

Not only is confrontation becoming a part of the worship experience, but it is being utilized more extensively by such men as William Glasser and O. H. Mowrer, in the field of psychology. Reality therapy and confrontational therapy both utilize the dynamic of confrontation in their counseling. William Glasser writes about his counseling relationship with one patient, and his utilization of confrontation, "She made it sound as if I had committed the unpardonable sin by confronting her with the reality of her behavior."<sup>23</sup> It is this confrontation dynamic that brings a significant shift in the lives of many who enter into reality therapy. We go along, as usual, without really thinking or considering the implications of our actions, until someone has the courage to hit us right between the eyes with the actual situation.

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<sup>21</sup>Raines, op. cit., p. 106.

<sup>22</sup>Daniel Taylor, "Is Confrontation Christian?", sermon delivered at First United Methodist Church, Boise, Idaho, January 11, 1970. (Mimeographed).

<sup>23</sup>William Glasser, Reality Therapy (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 78

The Black Manifesto has done just this. Many parish ministers were sitting around feeling sorry for themselves at the increased difficulty encountered at raising church budgets. Numerous finance committees look at their tasks without any hope, because they were short \$5,000 of their projected budget of \$150,000. Then the Black Manifesto came along, and confronted us with the fact that the church has money in large amounts, and that church buildings alone account for millions of dollars.

Black Manifesto confrontation hit the white church right where it hurts the most, in the pocketbook. It requested a small amount of money, from a giant business, and it is the realization that the church is a giant business that has placed so many whites on the defensive. Not only have our "sacred" worship services been invaded, but our falling away from what it means to be the church has been brought home to us in such a manner that we cannot ignore the charges, or dismiss them. Our sin is before us, because of the dynamic of confrontation.

Much discussion, writing, and experimentation is taking place with new forms of worship, and how these forms can become more relevant. It is interesting to note that a discussion developed during, and following, the social gospel movement of the early part of this century, over whether or not the social gospel movement failed because of its lack of vitality in worship. It was felt by many, and is still the feeling of some, that in order for a movement within the church to succeed, it must be related to worship and find expression in worship.

One who felt that worship must be related to social action and one's religious life style was Henry Demarest Lloyd. For Lloyd, pietism of his day was only a convenient escape for persons who sought to dodge their social action duty in worship. He wrote some time ago,

... to consider it worshipping God to sing, pray, and listen to sermons, while all about them from the world without the church windows rise the cries of those who are being murdered, plundered, betrayed, seems to me, in truth, atheism, not piety.<sup>24</sup>

Lloyd's comments seem to be an echo of the prophet Amos, when he said, "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies."<sup>25</sup> Confrontational worship re-

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<sup>24</sup>Horton Davies, "The Expression of the Social Gospel in Worship", Studia Liturgica II:3 (September 1963), 177.

<sup>25</sup>Amos 5:21.

lates to the needs of the world and requires a response of Christian action to those needs.

Washington Gladden said much the same as he attacked the introverted worship of what he called the elite. Gladden believed that the irrelevant worship of the church only proclaimed to the world that those who worshiped were the elite and not the elect. He wrote,

It is childish to suppose that we can shut ourselves within our little conventicles and sing and pray and have a happy time all by ourselves, saving our own souls, and letting the great roaring world outside go on its way to destruction . . . It misses the true function of the church by as much as the sanitary engineer would miss the problem of curing a malarious district, if he should try to catch the air in basketfuls and treat it with disinfectants.<sup>26</sup>

In spite of these early understandings of the relationship of worship to social action, we know all too often what happens in worship. We forget that there is a world beyond the walls of the sanctuary. The conviction is held by many that nothing secular, such as the Black Manifesto, is to come into the service and disrupt it. Paul Laurence Dunbar, after he decided not to enter the ministry, wrote a poem entitled "Religion". One of his stanzas speaks most dramatically to my point.

I am no priest of crooks nor creeds,  
For human wants and human needs  
Are more to me than prophets' deeds?  
And human tears and human cares  
Affect me more than human prayers.<sup>27</sup>

Dunbar's implied criticism all too often is correct, and his poem seems to be a commentary on much of the reaction and lack of action resulting from those congregations that experienced the Black Manifesto encounter. Prayer can be, and often is, a necessary and proper tool for worship, but when we make prayer (a reverent attitude) the sum total of our worship experience, then we do neglect, if not ignore, the world about us.

Confrontational worship is alive and responsive to the events of the day.

In speaking about this, Howard Moody says,

. . . an authentic ritual is one where reality is wrestled with like Jacob by the river Jabbok, struggling for the naked truth about himself and his place in the world. Right in the middle of our swinging, joyous service at Canterbury House, the San Francisco Mime Troupe acted out the trial of the Catonsville Nine. It kept in serious perspective the real world and real worship. Worship as celebration need not exclude confrontation—they belong together. Real worship will hold the two together in painful contradiction and thus the double-edged truth about our lives.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 178

<sup>27</sup>Benjamin Mays, The Negro's God (New York: Atheneum, 1969), p. 134

<sup>28</sup>Howard Moody, "Worship as Celebration and Confrontation", in Myron Bloy(ed.) Multi-Media Worship (New York: Seabury Press, 1969), p. 97

This double-edged truth, as brought out in celebration and confrontation, must be at the heart of confrontational worship. For confrontational worship requires an atmosphere of action, movement, and happening, and this takes place during celebration. But celebration is not enough to make worship authentic, for the demonic can easily be omitted from celebration. We must be reminded, through confrontation, just how far we have come from the quality of life that Jesus lived. Celebration makes it possible for our worship to be alive and "with it", but it is the dynamic of confrontation that allows our worship to be authentic.

Since confrontational worship deals with the events of the day in greater depth, maturity and openness is required for those who worship through confrontational methods. Whether they are sufficiently secure and mature, or not, does not make it fact that those who gather for worship can escape some of the demands of the day. Fred Gealy writes,

The life of the next several generations, we may expect, will less and less offer protection to those who do not wish to share the common lot of mankind. Not only does the vigor of communication force the joys and sufferings of others on our attention; increasingly, our private well-being is affected by distant and abstract events. Now, as never before, res publica must be the concern of every human being.<sup>29</sup>

Before entering the sanctuary, the problems and concerns of the day will become more and more part of life, because of their increasingly crucial nature. The question is whether worship will be an escape from modernity or whether it provides, through confrontation, the awareness and direction necessary to deal with the pressing issues of the day.

Confrontation is awareness, and only aware persons will finally be able to accept confrontational worship, deal with the issues it presents, and undertake the needed changes in their own lives to bring about social improvement. We must educate persons to this new worship style and guide them into being more mature and actualized persons. The aware person is able to actualize his potentials and to become a new being, so that he is able to respond with his life wherever there is human need. This quality of life can be reflected in the following prayer, which most certainly has come from an actualized person, that kind of person who responds positively to confrontational worship.

O God, whose purpose spans the ages,  
teach me thy will for the fleeting years that are mine.  
May I spend them without sloth and without waste,

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<sup>29</sup>Fred Gealy, Celebration (Nashville: Graded Press, 1969), p. 5

buying up the whole value of every hour.  
 From this brief miracle of time grant me to fashion life  
 so strong with integrity,  
 so rich in usefulness,  
 so keen in understanding,  
 That it may stand up in the judgement  
 to which death brings us all at last.  
 Eternal Spirit,  
 Whose power holds the galaxies of the sky,  
 the ends of the earth,  
 and the souls of all men  
 within an invisible net of love,  
 Use me in thy mighty working.  
 Stretch me for a far-reaching vocation.  
 Toughen and strengthen me for whatever difficulty  
 or pain my service may entail.  
 In a great and dangerous age, help me to live worthy  
 of my generation,  
 of my church,  
 and of my Lord. Amen.<sup>30</sup>

This prayer represents a goal or quality of life that must be cultivated in those who are to participate in worship of the present and future.

The psychological factors which have been described are reinforced by theological considerations. It is the nature of God to act at a point in time with an unanticipated thrust.

God is always coming to you in the sacrament of the present moment. Meet and receive him then with gratitude in that sacrament, however unexpected its outward form may be.<sup>31</sup>

Confrontational worship is an activity that comes in the present moment. It is no respector of what is proper or respectable, and it is certainly most unexpected. Paul had no inclination or warning that God would call him for a special task. The ninth chapter of the book of Acts makes this confrontational call quite clear. We do not need to throw away all order in our worship, for order is needed to put persons at ease and to allow them to participate without the worry of whether they should be standing or sitting. But much of the confrontational character of the first Black Manifesto would have been lost, if all in attendance would have been expecting it to come; it would have become like any other sermon.

At present, many of our worship services stifle God and prevent him from entering the service, and our lives. We often times seek such a prim and proper worship setting and service, that the moment God does speak to us in worship, we immediately call the

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<sup>30</sup>Herman Ahrens (ed.) (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1968), Tune In, p. 90.

<sup>31</sup>Maxie Dunnam, Gary Herbertson, and Everett Shostrom, The Manipulator and the Church (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 28

police, bar the door to the outside world, and boo and hiss. Howard Moody comments,

Our worship is nonparticipatory performance ordered and planned to perfection, guaranteed not to challenge or embarrass or involve the observer beyond the limits of his rational comprehension . . . Christian worship is full of symbols that have been tamed and domesticated so as not to disturb our feelings or our life style. The images we employ have been trivialized and there is present no symbol of Reality that captures our minds and captivates our spirits so that our bodies move with a new purpose in this world.<sup>32</sup>

Christian worship cannot be tamed nor become a mere performance; it deals with life issues and in most involving ways.

Confrontation from God to men can help to bring about increased awareness and self-actualization. But, in order for confrontation to reach persons continually and effectively, awareness and aliveness must already be present in those who worship. For example, blacks who have dramatically confronted the white church through the Black Manifesto, can only hope to reach persons who are already aware and have a high degree of self-actualization. On the other hand, the shock of confrontation may begin the process of growing awareness in the lives of many others. Confrontation can be used to bring about actualization, but it can do so only when the actualization process has already begun, or some hope is present of its beginning.

So it is that confrontational worship, at present, can only speak to a few. Much more training and discussion are needed as to what worship is and does, before confrontational worship can become a central dynamic in the worship of God. Confrontational worship is becoming a reality for more people, whether we like it or not. Events like the Black Manifesto have seen to that. Now we must be about the task of helping persons remember that God acts through confrontation and comes to us often at times when we wish he would not.

Worship is changing just as all else in life is changing, and to hope for a worship experience that remains without change is to hope for a God who no longer lives. Not only is worship changing, but what can be considered worship is changing as well. This change has come about because we are more certain that God calls us to be concerned and involved with all the aspects of life. This is one reason for confrontational worship, to remind us that the sanctuary is not some special place where we can retreat and forget. Confrontational worship includes all the aspects of life, and calls forth a total response on the

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<sup>32</sup>Moody, op. cit., p. 94.

part of those who participate. Howard Moody writes about a rally-worship experience in a black church during a civil rights demonstration in Alabama.

It was called a "civil rights rally" but it was a strange mixture of prayer meeting, clambake, and political pep rally in which the power and meaning of true worship broke through all the unorthodox and unacceptable forms of that dramatic three-hour meeting.<sup>33</sup>

It is here again, the breaking in of that which cannot be contained—God. We have tried to contain God in much of our worship, and so we, as Christians, have done little to put our teachings into deeds of action. Moody goes on to say,

The rock-'n'-roll spirituals were secularized hymns; the loud, emotive prayers were political petitions, the speeches and testimonies were morale builders preparing the troops for action against the "powers and principalities of darkness". The altar call was an invitation for people to go to jail or "to present your bodies as a living sacrifice which is your true worship".<sup>34</sup>

Confrontational worship calls forth a response, and that response, in order to be true worship, means placing one's life on the line for another who is oppressed. So it is that worship, in order to be alive and responsive to God's call, must take its agenda from the events, problems, and needs of the day. It is in this setting that a living God comes to us in worship, and requires a response from us. If we have gone to sleep in our worship, then that same living God is going to hit us over the head to wake us up to Christian social action. That hitting over the head process is confrontation.

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 89

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.,

## THE NEED FOR VARIETY IN WORSHIP

Confrontational worship is very much needed in the contemporary world. The word of God and the cries of men must enter fully into worship, but variety must, also, be central to our understanding of worship. Confrontational worship will lose its strength if used all the time, just as polite, orderly, formal worship has lost much of its strength.

However, any discussion about variety in worship must at the outset emphasize an underlying likeness in all forms of worship. Historically, this unity has been maintained by a common focus on God. This is now being challenged and questioned by death of God theology. The question must be asked, how does one worship if God is dead, or the word, "God", has little or no meaning for our time, or the word is so mixed up with numerous meanings that it cannot be understood or experienced? The above questions can be better understood by turning to some comments made by Harvey Cox.

For me, the idea of the "death of God" represents a crisis in our religious language and symbol structure, which makes the word, "God", ambiguous. It is not that the word means nothing to "modern man", as vanBuren contends, but that it means so many things to different people that it blurs communication rather than facilitating it.<sup>1</sup>

This confusion and blurring that Cox speaks about is one of the reasons for the necessity of specific meanings in worship. Worship, for too long, has been uncertain, confused, nice sounding, nonspecific, and bent on not offending. Worship has been so nonspecific that we have had very little direction, and God himself has been held back so that he could not present himself and his will to those who worshiped. Harvey Seifert and Howard Clinebell write,

Another mark of the art of prophetic communication is that it deals with specific issues and concrete actions about which hearers can do something if they choose . . . Harvey Cox states: "It is very doubtful . . . whether proclamation which is not highly specific can be thought of as preaching in the biblical sense at all." Research has shown that generalizations have little effect on attitude.<sup>2</sup>

When worship becomes very much nonspecific and orderly, much confusion and unclarity and uncertainty arises. Worship which is nonspecific is the kind of worship which has distorted, blurred, and almost lost God to our understanding. Yet he is needed for worship.

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<sup>1</sup>Harvey Cox, "The Death of God and the Future of Theology, in William Miller, The New Christianity (New York: Dell, 1967), p. 381.

<sup>2</sup>Harvey Seifert and Howard Clinebell, Personal Growth and Social Change (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), p. 138.

So, we must find a variety of ways which appeal to differing persons, but with a common content of religious experience in relationship to God.

Another important aspect of worship is that it relates to the secular. When worship is concerned with the problems and needs of the world and human life, we begin to experience and relate to a God that still has meaning and reason for being in our world.

On this point of secular concern, even death of God theologians have retained an emphasis on, and concern for, the problems of the world. Thomas Ogletree, in writing about Hamilton and van Buren says, "Here the reality of God is indicated not at the boundaries of life but in the midst of the world . . . this means ethical involvement in the struggles of men".<sup>3</sup> Here we see that a concern for God is a central focusing point, for the reality of God is seen in the meeting of human need in our world. Worship, at its best, seeks to present the ethical imperative of the day, in such a manner that one who worships cannot escape the struggles and needs of mankind. Worship does not seek to bring about some isolated, mystical, transcendent encounter between God and man. Instead, its central concern is to expose the human situation by exposing it to the divine and so find appropriate human actions for the improvement of the situation. John Harwood, in writing about contemporary church music has this to say,

There is little disagreement that sacred music should be directed to God, but the phrase, "and not man", suggests a transcendental escapism. A society which experiences the absence of divinity and an ensuing lovelessness is certainly an appropriate confessional concern of worship. Ethics is certainly as appropriate an issue for church music as transcendental theology, and it is precisely at the point of ethics that contemporary music is relevant.<sup>4</sup>

It is in relating this central reality of God's concern for the world to the totality of life, that we find we need variety in worship so that many more persons can be made to realize that they must take responsibility for the world.

Granted, there may be many differences between death of God theologians and confrontational worship practices, but one of several exciting and helpful similarities is the central concern summed up in the words of Thomas Ogletree, "In all cases, being a Christian means a distinctive way of being in the world".<sup>5</sup> This being in the world, taking

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<sup>3</sup>Thomas Ogletree, The Death of God Controversy (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 110

<sup>4</sup>John Harwood, "Come into His Presence with Singing", Religion in Life XXXIX:2 (Summer 1970), 254

<sup>5</sup>Ogletree, op. cit., p. 110

responsibility for the problems of the world, I would affirm, is the call that God is making to us today, especially through confrontational worship. Somehow, the word is getting to us from somewhere, and from someone, to "get with it". Our fellowmen need a helping hand, and right NOW.

At this point, however, we must introduce the thought of Richard Rubenstein into the discussion. His work, After Auschwitz, presents some most insightful discussion into worship and helps us to balance our confrontational worship happening with other types of worship. His chapter on the death camps can only intensify the need for confrontational worship—that kind and quality of worship that speaks out against the evils of society. But he suggests that confrontational worship—worship that seeks to exhort persons to moral and ethical action—is not the kind of worship and liturgy needed all the time. In reference to the sacrificial ritual of Jewish worship, he comments that it, too, is one of the most universally accepted kinds of worship. He suggests that moral considerations and contemplation are rather late developments in the liturgy, and perhaps a rather shallow one, at that.

Rubenstein writes,

Though prayer, contemplation, and moral exhortation undoubtedly have played an important role in religion, they are late expressions of a tendency which has been by no means universal. Sacrificial ritual was regarded as "primitive" and was contrasted with the superior "spiritual" qualities of prophetic religion and morality. Above all, the ethical and moral fruits of the religious life were stressed as central and decisive. Prophetic religion alone was regarded as true religion. It was thought to be the culmination of mankind's development toward ever more significant religious and moral attainments.<sup>6</sup>

However, Rubenstein does not stop with the above words; he goes on to suggest that prophetic religion and liturgy bring little improvement in the lives of those who participate. The more traditional modes of religious expression in the liturgy, Rubenstein believes, are infinitively more disturbing than moral exhortation. He cites the example of sacrifice to support his belief. In reference to liturgy that stresses the moral and ethical dimensions, he writes that they ". . . can usually never do more than reach the level of rational, conscious decision in the worshipper. The worshipper is given a series of alternatives concerning what he may believe and do."<sup>7</sup> These alternatives, Rubenstein believes, have their origin and operation in the conscious-rational part of the person; hence, they only deal with

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<sup>6</sup>Richard L. Rubenstein, After Auschwitz (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merril, 1966), pp. 93-94. See, also, the comments on Rubenstein in Harvey Cox, The Feast of Fools (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 30.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 100

part of the personality and leave much of it untouched. He writes,

He is asked frequently to make a conscious decision in favor of one pattern of behavior and belief over another. At no point is there a hint of the irony, the ambiguity, and the hidden complexities of affirmation and denial which are involved in all human decision making. Such religious activity is largely addressed to the conscious ego and has nothing to say to the unconscious elements in the make-up of the participant.<sup>8</sup>

Since exhortation liturgy deals only with part of the person, it is weaker than that kind of liturgy which deals with the total person. Harvey Cox writes about Rubenstein and says, "He would have us build temples and holy places to draw us away from the maddening crowd of social change and to help us quietly regain our psychic humility and our bearings."<sup>9</sup> Rubenstein's kind of liturgy is necessary, but it cannot be the only kind of liturgy available for our worship. We need variety in our worship experiences, so that God can speak to us in numerous ways and reach our sinful nature so that we can become persons living for others first. Perhaps no one kind of liturgy has the final say, for people are different and so worship in different ways.

Rubenstein enables us to balance the experience of confrontational worship with a less ethically charged service, and to realize more fully the necessity for variety in worship. Variety is necessary in worship, for worship is that experience in life which must relate to the whole person. Man is an emotional creature and he is a rational being. He is filled with love, hate, compassion, uncertainty, envy, jealousy, humility, and patience. Man needs comfort and safety, as well as challenge and confrontation. So it is that variety is needed in worship, to speak to a variety of human qualities, emotions, and styles of living. Traditional worship has a necessary place, highly emotional worship, likewise, is needed, confrontation is necessary, as well as comfort and safety.

We can now turn to the work of Harvey Cox and his most refreshing book on worship. Cox asserts the importance of festival and the festival quality in worship. He adds to the style of festival action, the act of fantasy and suggests that festival and fantasy need to be recognized as ingredients for worship. Harvey Cox writes these hope-filled words,

Fantasy like festivity reveals man's capacity to go beyond the empirical world of the here and now. But fantasy exceeds festivity. In it man not only relives and anticipates, he remakes the past and creates wholly new futures. Fantasy is a humus. Out of it man's ability to invent and innovate grows. Fantasy is the richest source of human creativity.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 100-101.

<sup>9</sup>Cox, op. cit., p. 31

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 59

The elements of festival and fantasy in worship, balanced by ethical-confrontational worship, enable us to reach the total person and transform him. No part is left out. The rational is not stressed to the point of bringing about what Rubenstein calls uncontrolled irrationality. For Rubenstein believes that when man seeks constantly to do the rational, to improve himself and his world, to concentrate on correcting evils and problems, he "burns himself out" in the process. Overwork, or, in the case of rational worship, over-stressing improvement and needed change, will finally wear the person out, bring discouragement, and perhaps anger and rage. On the other hand, festival and fantasy can get out of control; we have all experienced a festive occasion where common sense was left behind for a reckless moment of irresponsible pleasure. Through variety in worship, the total person is reached, and a larger number of persons are reached.

The festival and fantasy character of the worship of Harvey Cox, coupled with the ethical imperative dynamic of confrontational worship, and the more traditional liturgy of Rubenstein, seems to be that event which can and must change the actions of contemporary man. Auschwitz is still too near to be forgotten, and the black man cries out with impatience and hatred from the oppressive world he is in. These historical facts cannot but challenge the parish minister into seeking and utilizing new and various forms of liturgical expression.

Variety in worship will help prevent uncontrolled irrationality from happening, and it will prevent the excitement of the moment from getting the best of us. Festival, fantasy, and confrontational worship are all aspects of worship that can, and will, bring about new life and freedom in the worship participants so that creative social action can, and will, take place.

Variety enables the totality of the personality to be reached. Life, too often, is too serious, especially in the adult world, and so we need celebration, festival, and fantasy. The style of our worship makes all the difference. In McLuhan language, the medium becomes central to the message. Harvey Cox writes about festival worship in these words,

There are those who argue that this playful air represents a perversion of the faith. I think they are wrong. For such people, the gravity of conventional Christianity is its normal and even normative style. The truth may very well be that we have inherited a recently perverted form of Christianity, that its terrible sobriety is a distortion of its real genius, and that a kind of playfulness lies much closer to its heart than solemnity does.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 54

Contemporary worship which allows for variety enables man to be confronted by the serious problems and questions of the day. The sanctuary is not reserved for only "holy thoughts", but is, also, a place where the demands of the moment break in at every thought and action of the liturgy. However, the liturgy of confrontation must, also, allow and affirm that which is festive in character and the experience we call fantasy, for only such worship reaches the total personality, changing it, recharging it, and directing it into new deeds of Christian service.

## FANTASY AS CONTENT FOR WORSHIP

During 1970, I experienced a most exciting summer at Pacific Oaks, a well-known nursery school in Pasadena, California. One of the most profound and far-reaching aspects of such an experience is in the area of play and fantasy. Children, it goes almost without saying, have a natural and normal grasp of play and fantasy. These activities for children really become vocation. It is out of this experience at Pacific Oaks, and the work of Harvey Cox in the area of worship as fantasy and festival, that I have come to some interesting and exciting thoughts on worship in both the adult and child. It is my conviction that the quality of play and fantasy present in the child must be preserved, developed, and enhanced in the adult.

This maintenance and development factor must be understood and guided in the child as he grows up, so that meaningful worship may take place in the life of the adult. Harold Rugg makes reference to the usual loss of imagination and fantasy in the adult world. He writes in reference to what he calls "eidetic" imagery which is very common in children, but almost totally lacking in adults. "Eidetic" imagery means to see the out-thereness, the almost three-dimensional stereoscopic aspect of imagination.<sup>1</sup> Rugg writes these words about a study of the differences between adults and children,

Sixty percent of the children, but only 7 percent of the adults, possessed this faculty in a highly developed state. Why the difference? Certainly there are two factors: The freer, more imaginative tendencies of children; and the predominance of verbalism in the life of the grown-up and its lesser degree in childhood.<sup>2</sup>

This vast gap between children and adults in regards to "eidetic" imagery, largely due to the factors of verbalization and imagination, applies, also, to the religious life. Worship for most persons in the 20th century, up until the present, has been very orderly, rational, reverent, mechanical, and without fantasy, play, and imaginative thinking. But this is changing. New things are happening in the experience of worship, or perhaps we should say that many old things are being recovered and finding new meaning. For example, the experience of the Feast of Fools, a highly playful happening in the middle ages, is now being recalled by several theologians of our time. John Davies several years ago, before the now far-reaching book by Harvey Cox, wrote about this playful celebration. Davies writes,

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<sup>1</sup>Harold Rugg, Imagination (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 71

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

The ruling idea of the feast was the inversion of status and the burlesque performance by the inferior clergy of functions proper to the higher grades. It, therefore, involved much more than dancing, and included activities which are best considered later in relation to games.<sup>3</sup>

It is significant to note that John Davies believes the Feast of Fools happening to be most closely associated with game playing. In fact, he goes on to suggest that the Feast of Fools was one of those events which took place in the church, had a long history in the church, and its worship, but must be understood most fully as the playing of games.

We can see this playing of games in a description of the Feast of Fools found by Davies. A brief part of it follows:

The fools jangle the bells . . . , they take the higher stalls, sing dissonantly, repeat meaningless words, say the "messe liesse or the missa fatuorum", preach the "sermones fatui", cense with pudding and sausage or with old shoes . . .<sup>4</sup>

This excerpt gives us an understanding of the games quality present in worship from a most early time, and, also, gives us some insight into the utilization of fantasy and imagination in the worship service. Davies goes on to cite numerous other examples of games in the worship service, and we refer the reader to his most helpful work for greater detail. The point is that fantasy, play, and imagination have been elements in worship in the past, but then were lost, and are just now being rediscovered.

Let us turn to a more detailed look at fantasy, imagination, and play in worship by referring to the work of Harvey Cox. Cox sees fantasy as central to the experience of man and the happening of worship. He believes the experience of fantasy has been all but lost in our highly scientific, rational, verbal world. But he, too, sees a rebirth of fantasy and play. He writes about imagination as a lower level of full-blown fantasy:

In imagination, we set aside for a moment our usual decorum and social inhibition . . . This imagination in all its forms resembles the "legitimated excess" of celebration. This is why the costume party, in which we playfully suspend for awhile our normal roles and become pirates and princesses will always have a place. Imagination opens doors that are normally closed to us.<sup>5</sup>

Imagination, for Harvey Cox, is a necessity for fully developed existence. But he goes beyond the dynamic of imagination into the fullest realm of fantasy, just as at Disneyland one enters Fantasyland, after wandering through other lands where imagination loomed large. Cox be-

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<sup>3</sup>John Gordon Davies, The Secular Use of Church Buildings (London: SCM Press, 1968), p. 53.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 81

<sup>5</sup>Harvey Cox, The Feast of Fools (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969, p. 61-62.

lieves fantasy to be a much more advanced state of imagination. It is in his understanding of fantasy that we see a strong correlation with the play of little children. Harvey Cox writes about fantasy:

Fantasy, as I shall use the word, is "advanced imagining". In fantasy, no holds are barred. We suspend not only the rules of social conduct, but the whole structure of everyday "reality". In fantasy we become not only our ideal selves, but totally different people. We soar. We give reign not only to socially discouraged impulses but to physically impossible exploits and even to logically contradictory events. Fantasy is the habitat of dragons, magic, wands, and instant mutations.<sup>6</sup>

Fantasy, in this sense, is an experience one sees every day at Pacific Oaks. It is that happening that sets little boys to taking on countless odds to protect their fort from advancing herds of wild beasts. It is in that kingdom that little girls dream and really believe, if just for a moment, that they are queen to a vast land where knights and a charming king respond to their every wish and command. Fantasy puts us into an exciting, or bearable, or hopeful and challenge-filled situation.

Play, as well as fantasy, belongs in both the worship experience and in the world of children. Play is central to the life of Pacific Oaks, and it is that activity in which growth takes place. This becomes growth in more than a physical and emotional sense, for play and fantasy allow the human personality to flower to its fullest.

The fantasy and play of Harvey Cox comes remarkably close to the kind and quality of play that is known to little ones. Clark E. Moustakas writes about play therapy in normal children with these words:

It offers a relationship in a situation where the boundaries are greatly expanded. In the playroom, children can feel their feelings completely. They can express hatred, fear, and anger, be resentful and disgusted or hilarious, joyous, and silly. They can be fully themselves. They can be babies at one moment who speak a garbled language and act immaturely and later their own age without fear of being examined and criticized. In fantasy they can be grown men and women who tell people what to do and how to do it. They can be, in their imaginative play, anything they want to be.<sup>7</sup>

It is this being anything one wants to be and doing anything one wants to do that is at the heart of fantasy and play. They are fruitful ground for childhood growth. They can be fuel for adult growth, as well. But more importantly, play and fantasy can be those dynamics which allow both child and adult a new freedom, to dance with joy even when the going gets rough, and to dream new dreams and see new visions which point men in the direction of a

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 62

<sup>7</sup>Clark Moustakas, Children in Play Therapy (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1953), p.17.

more full and more meaningful life.

The cords between child and adult fantasy and play are becoming stronger. Play and fantasy must become a part of the adult world, just as it is a normal segment and experience in the world of children. But the question should be asked, where can the adult with his many responsibilities, demands, and problems before him have a place to play and fantasize? Worship, I believe, is just that kind of place.

Unfortunately, the adult has very little time for fantasy and play, and much of it is condemned or is not expected or accepted social behavior. Sigmund Freud has put his finger on this condemnation. Freud writes about the freedom of the child to fantasize, but the lack of the same freedom for adults.

With the adult, it is otherwise; on the one hand, he knows that he is expected not to play any longer or to day-dream, but to be making his way in a real world. On the other hand, some of the wishes from which his phantasies spring are such as have to be entirely hidden; therefore, he is ashamed of his phantasies as being childish and as something prohibited.<sup>8</sup>

This prohibition on play and fantasy in the adult world is unfortunate, for much good can come from it. It is strange, too, that such a healthy thing in childhood should be so hidden, prohibited, and looked down upon in the adult world. But this is changing, and the place it can change most quickly is in the worship experience.

A word of support for the importance and necessity of play comes from the most helpful work of Virginia Axline. In her book on play therapy, we see many reasons for play in the world of children. Many of the reasons do not necessarily need to be therapeutic reasons either, for normal children need play just as much as children suffering from emotional or personality problems. She writes about non-directive play therapy with these words:

... it may be described as an opportunity that is offered to the child to experience growth under the most favorable conditions. Since play is his natural medium for self-expression, the child is given the opportunity to play out his accumulated feelings of tension, frustration, insecurity, aggression, fear, bewilderment, confusion. By playing out these feelings he brings them to the surface, gets them out in the open, faces them, learns to control them, or abandons them.<sup>9</sup>

The above description of the reasons for play does not need to be limited to children. Granted, children often times have an environment designed for play, but this should not prevent an adult from playing. Fear, aggression, frustration, tension, confusion, and many other emo-

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<sup>8</sup>Sigmund Freud, On Creativity and the Unconscious (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 47.

<sup>9</sup>Virginia M. Axline, Play Therapy (New York: Ballantine Books, 1969), p. 16

tions are very much a part of the adult world, and they need to be released and understood for healthy living.

It is for an understanding, awareness and skill in handling various emotions that play is so very important for children and for adults, as well. Wishes, desires, and fantasies are allowed to come forth and to be worked into one's style of action and personality. P. M. Pickard writes about this bringing out of frequently forbidden, or little understood, wishes or fantasies. He says,

In their play, children often bring out forbidden wishes and try to see how to fit them into a pattern of acceptable behaviour. If the forbidden wish is a serious trouble to them, they have to play the same game over and over again. In the stories we tell them, we can show them that we know of forbidden wishes; sharing the forbidden wishes with them, in the form of ogres, villains, and dragons, we sanction thinking about such things, and make it easier for the children to do their work.<sup>10</sup>

We begin to see more fully how play works and why it is so important. When adults, also, are allowed to bring out underlying dreams, wishes, and fantasies, then we can deal with them and become more alive because we have integrated such thinking and feeling into our living.

Pickard goes on into even more significant thinking with regards to play and story telling. He writes,

Indeed, a hero who is finally quite kind to the villain is most helpful in guiding the children towards resolution of conflicts; such a merciful hero opens the way for mature compassion. But the idea of the hero being kind to the villain leads us on to one of the most fascinating aspects of telling stories to children. It concerns keeping the balance by means of what is called aesthetic distance. If in the end the hero is going to be quite kind to the villain, the children's passion against the wicked villain must not be too fiercely aroused.<sup>11</sup>

Play can become that vehicle whereby deep emotion is brought forth and channeled in such a way that such emotion is used for constructive and growth purposes, instead of for evil and destruction.

Aesthetic distance is very important for proper play, story telling, and fantasy. Pickard even suggests several ways of story telling which allow for aesthetic distance. He suggests that aesthetic distance can only occur successfully, when an excess of feeling is not permitted or reached. Too much anger, hatred, or unkindness towards the villain of the story or play will not allow the participants or listeners to have any compassion for the vil-

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<sup>10</sup>P. M. Pickard, The Activity of Children (London: Longmans, 1965), p. 79

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 80

lain, nor will it allow the conflict to be resolved. Likewise, too much emphasis upon a hero's courage, skill, patience, and forethought can make the "good guy" so good that children will not be able at all to identify with such a figure or to accept his actions as possible for them. For example, I can think of one event at Pacific Oakes involving a boy we will call Evan. Evan became so involved in a story about wild beasts and identified so closely with the little boy who controlled these wild beasts, that it took him until the following day to come out of his fantasy world, where he had control of a large herd of the most wild beasts ever imaginable.

Pickard believes this aesthetic distance to be a natural development for children. He believes it to be biological in nature. This may or may not be the case, and it is not our purpose to debate such an issue. But we can most assuredly attest to its existence in little children. More importantly is what takes place in the event we call aesthetic distance. Pickard sees during the period of aesthetic distance a sort of disorientation, shock, or disengagement. It is during this disengagement that reflection occurs and new insight and growth takes place. It is very interesting to note that Pickard sees this suspension and reflection time taking place in religious ceremonies. Let us look at a most helpful paragraph from his book to see, in his own words, what we are describing. Pickard writes,

In the history of human cultures, this state of disorientation seems to have been carefully fostered in religious ceremonies, and later, at secular performances in drama . . . It is as if something from the earliest stages of play, before the inward model of the outer world was too rigidly organized, were being retained. Only by having periods of disengagement from the immediate environment could new ideas rise in the mind.<sup>12</sup>

We see here very clearly a relationship between play and that which needs to take place in order for growth to occur. It is most interesting to note that Pickard sees this relationship of disengagement first taking place in religious ritual, and, also, as a part of the earliest stages of play, before the adult world of reality has rigidly organized the personality. Here we see a call for a freeing activity that will allow one to become disengaged from the rigidly structured world, so that new growth and freedom can be achieved.

It is exciting and interesting to note that from another tradition and perspective far different than my own, and far different in orientation from that of Pickard, comes a similar understanding of what ritual and liturgy should be about and contain.

Richard Rubenstein, whose work we have already mentioned, has written in After Auschwitz

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

some very challenging and helpful words concerning the content of liturgy. Speaking out of a Jewish context and heritage, and keeping in mind the horrible experience of Auschwitz, Rubenstein is against any uncontrollable irrationality, or any situation that demands so much of the rational-conscious decision-making process that uncontrolled irrationality will most assuredly take place. His plea, in other words, is for those experiences in worship which allow persons to experience the whole broad spectrum of human emotion, feeling, and thought. He pleads for activity in worship that does not deal centrally with exhortation, decision making, or ethical considerations. He wants a liturgy that contains ancient ritual and myth, a little bit of magic, and certainly a great amount of play and drama. Rubenstein writes these words:

I know as well as you do that the sacrificial cults were magic palliatives which did not in actuality cleanse the community of either guilt or evil, but I am, also, convinced that any attempt to take controlled magic out of religion will not result in greater rationality or insightful behavior, but in periodic outbursts of devastatingly uncontrolled irrationality.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to those liturgical activities which force the adult into rationally making ethical decisions or commitments, Rubenstein suggests that worship must contain some magic, ancient myth and ritual, and some playing, fantasizing, and story telling.

Barren worship, that is, worship which becomes too rational, serious, and ethical, may do just what Rubenstein does not want to happen. The solution he offers will prevent this uncontrolled irrationality from taking place.

We look once again to the work of Harvey Cox, for a new style of worship that allows adults to enter into playful activity through fantasy, disengagement, and imagination. The style of one's worship makes all the difference for Harvey Cox, or, in MuLuhan terminology, the medium becomes a part of the message. Cox writes about festival and fantasy in worship with these words,

People who have rejected Christian ideas in their didactic form can sometimes affirm them in festivity. Some who cannot say a prayer may still be able to dance it. People who cannot hope may be able to laugh.<sup>14</sup>

This new style of worship allows man to dream, to laugh, to dance, to do a "happy hop", if he so wishes. It is a freeing kind of experience. The spirit soars, is not contained, and this allows man to enter into new and refreshing experiences.

Ritual is very much necessary for fantasy and play in the adult world.

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<sup>13</sup>Richard L. Rubenstein, After Auschwitz (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), p. 106.

<sup>14</sup>Cox, op. cit., p. 54.

Harvey Cox has some interesting comments on the relationship between fantasy and ritual.

He writes these words,

Ritual provides both the form and the occasion for the expression of fantasy. It is through ritual movement, gesture, song, and dance that man keeps in touch with the sources of creativity. Ritual appeared along with myth in man's development, and springs from the same sources. In ritual, men "act out" the reveries and hopes of the tribe. Ritual is social fantasy. It is very similar to celebration and in some ways indistinguishable from it.<sup>15</sup>

Ritual is that activity which allows and creates fantasy and play. It is in the total involvement of the body and mind, that one reaches into the innermost parts of the adult world and personality to draw forth new life, creativity, and possibilities for growth. Growth occurs for children in the world of play and fantasy in such a place as Pacific Oaks. Likewise, in the adult world worship can be that place where growth will occur, if only we discover that worship needs to utilize play and fantasy as central aspects of its content.

What kind of a setting do we need for worship that is fantasizing, festive, and playful? Such a setting can be found in the world of little children. Just as the dynamics of play and fantasy in the world of children are needed in the adult world, much of the physical environment, too, is needed. This means a much different setting than the rigid, formal, cold, and orderly rooms where most of our worship takes place. We think of the sanctuary and assume that fixed pews have always been a part of the worship area. John Davies certainly dispels this thought. In his study of the sanctuary, he has found that until the seventeenth century, very few places of worship had anything that even came close to fixed pews in formally line-up rows. Davies writes about pews and their absence when he says,

There was little in the way of seating, although occasionally a few wooden or stone benches were provided for the aged and infirm . . . This was the practice until the thirteenth century, so that the spacious naves were free from any fixed objects that might prevent circulation or any activity in which Christians might wish to engage.

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The play room is certainly free from any fixed-formal seating pattern, so should the playroom we call the sanctuary.

A good description of the playroom for children's play can be found in Virginia Axline's book. By changing only a few of her comments and suggestions, I believe a room for adult worship can similarly be most helpfully designed and furnished. Axline suggests:

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 70-71

<sup>16</sup>Davies, op. cit., p. 138

There should be a sink in the room with hot and cold running water. The windows should be protected by gratings or screens. The walls and floors should be protected with a material that is easily cleaned and that will withstand clay, paint, water, and mallet attack . . . the room can be wired for phonographic recordings.<sup>17</sup>

We can begin to see the possibilities for a new and different style of worship room, but one necessary for adult fantasy and play. We could, also, add to the above list such items as equipment for films, slides, and filmstrips, plenty of room for banner display, a place for dance, interpretative movement, and drama, and plenty of room for circles, small groups, and refreshments.

A good example of a worship experience that called forth the activity of fantasy, happened at the United Methodist Church of La Habra, California, in July of 1970. The fellowship hall was selected over the sanctuary for the service. A large circle was formed with chairs, in the midst of the circle were numerous strips of cardboard in various sizes. After the opening segments of the liturgy were finished, those present were asked to gather into small teams to prepare a symbol, happening, or whatever would relate their team to God. Fantasy and imagination took over and after forty-five minutes the room took the shape of an art-sculpture gallery.

The environment is most important and suggestive. Pacific Oaks, with its large play areas and varieties of play equipment, most certainly demonstrates this well. Play and fantasy will only take place in adult worship if the room for such worship is prepared like a room for play and fantasy, and not like most of our sanctuaries are now—cold, formal, rigid, depressing, and unimaginative. Toys may not be needed, but space to create, to finger-paint, to dance, to talk with another, and to view films is most necessary for adult worship.

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<sup>17</sup>Axline, op. cit., pp. 54-55

## CHAPTER VII

## DANCING WITH GOD

At the heart of this dissertation can be found the conviction that worship is the source and strength for creative social action. It can be such a source and strength only if the Gospel of Jesus Christ is allowed to catch the lives, dreams, visions, thinking, and living of those who worship. The Gospel speaks clearly today, just as it did some two thousand years ago. Daniel Taylor writes,

The Gospel speaks to our condition. Indeed, witness that is not relevant is to that extent unfaithful. For the Christian message seeks to effect an indescribable difference in life and society. The timeliness of truth matches its permanence. If the Gospel is to be effective now, it must speak to the prevailing trends of our civilization. And it must speak so as to be understood.<sup>1</sup>

Worship is that place where the Gospel needs to speak the clearest and loudest, and in language and instruction that can be understood. Worship is that place and happening which enables worshipers to go into all the world and to transform it with God's help and guidance.

Worship cannot be divorced from creative social action; in fact, worship is only true and proper worship when its happening is culminated in deeds of Christian service and compassion. John thirteen, the thirty-fifth verse, makes this action quite clear. "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." This loving one another is expressed in deeds of Christian service which result from the experience of worship.

Horton Davies cites the words of Henry Demarest Lloyd,

To consider it worshipping God to sing, pray, and listen to sermons, while all about them from the world without the church windows rise the cries of those who are being murdered, plundered, betrayed, seems to me, in truth atheism, not piety.<sup>2</sup>

The call is before us to make worship a living and active event. If we do not do this, then God will be lost to mankind through our lack of commitment to him, and our nation and world will be destroyed because of man's inhumanity to man.

Worship can be a great source of strength and direction for our daily Christian living, but it can only bring new life to us when variety is offered to those who worship. Our worship must be serious at times, confronting mankind with the urgent needs and pro-

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel E. Taylor (ed.) Peace and Power (Washington: Board of Christian Social Concerns, 1960), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Horton Davies, "The Expression of the Social Gospel in Worship", Studia Liturgica II:3 (September 1963), 177

blems of the day. Worship must, also, be festive and filled with fantasy, so that the totality of human personality is reached and inspired. Creative social action only comes from men and women who have learned what it means to worship, and have opened their lives, thoughts, and hearts to a God who speaks in a variety of ways. Our own openness to variety in worship, allows us to be the kind of free being that Jesus became, looking after the needs of others first. This is the beginning of creative Christian social action.

The problems and needs of our world are becoming more acute and urgent. Our brothers and sisters cry out in pain, suffering, and injury, needing our help and compassion. The world can be painted in dark and somber colors. These cries of human need must enter into the very heart of our worship. Through festival and fantasy, as well as confrontational worship, we can learn to serve. We can live our service going about doing the happy hop that Snoopy does so well, because we rest in the knowledge and love of God and his ministering son Jesus. In the midst of a troubled world, we can bring life and light, dancing our faith, saying "yes" to that which is good in life, replacing that which is evil in life. We can dance with God and sing praises to God just as the psalmist did in the spirit of new life.

We are able to dance with God, when in the experience of worship our celebration, festivity, and fantasy lift us above the sorrow and sadness of the world to a higher perspective. This does not mean that we are to ignore the problems and needs of the world. After the dynamic of confrontation enters our worship, then we are guided by God into paths of creative Christian social action. We glimpse in worship how to go about solving these problems, and we know that with God's help we can do so. This brings us to our feet, dancing with God, towards a better place for all mankind. The words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer capture this joy and dance,

Daring to do what is right, not what fancy may tell you, valiantly grasping occasions, not cravenly doubting,

Freedom comes only through deeds, not through thoughts taking wing.

Faint not nor fear, but go out to the storm and the action.

Trusting in God, whose commandment we faithfully follow: freedom exultant will welcome our spirits with joy.<sup>3</sup>

It is in committing ourselves to God in the experience of worship that we find the freedom to live lives of Christian service. It is in our commitment to the style of life that places others

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<sup>3</sup>Mary Bosanquet, The Life and Death of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (New York: Harper and Row, 1969)

first, that we find the greatest joy, and the most profound reason for celebrating. Then we begin to learn to dance along with God, as together we seek to build a better world for all mankind.

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